Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
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Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 1 MARCH 1962

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. D. E. Nicholson, Murrumba) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS

POLICE AQUA-LUNG SQUAD

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"(1) In view of the apparent inadequacy of grappling irons as against the use of skin-divers, will he give consideration to the establishment of a Police Under-water Group similar to that operated by the Police Department in Sydney?"

"(2) Is he aware of the excellent work being carried out by Police Constable Adams of Windsor station, using his own aqua-lung equipment and at his own expense?"

"(3) Although knowing that Constable Adams himself does not seek or expect any reward or recompense, does he not consider that his efforts deserve some recognition?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"(1) Consideration has already been given to the establishment of an aqualung squad to be attached to the Water Police Station in Brisbane."

"(2) Yes."

"(3) Yes. The Commissioner of Police has recognised the initiative displayed by Senior Constable Adams in this connection and the Senior Constable is being transferred to the Water Police Station, Brisbane, where his services will be utilised when the opportunity offers, and his experience will be invaluable in the training of other interested members in skin diving at that station."

REGISTRATION OF BUILDERS

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) asked the Premier—

"In reference to the recent press statement in "The Sunday Mail" of February 25 made on behalf of the Master Builders' Association of Queensland by Mr. L. J. Handlin, their executive member, to the effect that the association had received no official word from the State Government on its campaign for registration of builders, has his Government given any consideration to the registration of builders?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

"Cabinet has had under consideration a a proposal by the Master Builders' Association for the registration of builders. No compelling reason can be seen in the public interest to single out builders as a class and require them to be licensed, and consequently Cabinet has decided not to agree to the proposal. The Master Builders' Association is being so informed."

REPORT BY DEPUTY PREMIER TO PRIME MINISTER ON COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT'S SPECIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

"(1) Is it true as announced in "The Sunday Mail" of February 25, 1962, that the Deputy Premier, Mr. Morris, will go to Canberra every month to tell Mr. Menzies how the Commonwealth Government's special financial aid is working out?"

"(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, does not such an arrangement greatly reduce the status and importance of the Treasurer, who is the appropriate Minister to handle and control the finances of the State?"

"(3) If the answer to the second part of my question is in the negative, is it to be construed that the arrangement referred to is based on Party political considerations rather than using the normal channel of ministerial responsibility?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

"(1) This is a purely private arrangement between Liberal Party leaders which was made with my full knowledge."

"(2 and 3) The correct channel of communication on official matters is still, as it always has been, between Prime Minister and Premier and it will continue this way."

TENDERS FOR ROTARY CLOTHES HOISTS

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

"(1) Is it a fact that officers of the State Stores Board were instructed to adhere rigidly to the instruction regarding the granting of five per centum preference to Queensland manufacturers over manufacturers in other States when tenders for the supply of rotary clothes hoists, which closed on August 28, 1961, were considered?"

"(2) If so, why were not the contracts for 12 feet and 20 feet "Hibiscus" clothes hoists accepted rather than the tender by a South Australian firm which was higher?"

"(3) Are not the responsible officers instructed to take notice of quality as well as price and the considerable saving in installation which would have been had by accepting the Queensland product?"

"(4) Is not a rigid adherence to a five per centum preference to Queensland manufacturers in this instance undesirable in view of the Treasurer's approach to the Federal Government to place a more equitable percentage of Commonwealth orders in this State?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

"(1) The State Board applies the Government's policy of preference and in this particular instance there was no variation from the procedure normally followed."

"(2) It is not correct to say that the 12 feet and 20 feet 'Hibiscus' clothes hoists were lower in price than the accepted tender for models conforming to State Stores specifications. For instance, the tendered prices of the Hills 'Senior Special' 12 feet hoist which was accepted by the Board was £9 5s. and that of comparable 12 feet 'Hibiscus' hoists £11 4s., whilst the 20 feet Hills Hoist was £10 9s. 6d. as against £12 10s. for the 'Hibiscus' hoist."

"(3) In dealing with tenders, all factors, including quality and place of manufacture, are taken into consideration. In this particular case, the Board's decision was supported by highly qualified technical officers of the Government Service."

"(4) There was no question of a rigid adherence to policy in this instance. The prime factor in arriving at the decision made was that the Queensland product was unfortunately not comparable in price and quality and the Board was reluctantly compelled to place the contract elsewhere. Might I add that the successful tenderer also maintains a staff of approximately 90 employees in its Queensland establishment."

RESUMPTION OF LAND OWNED BY MR. L. HUTTON, FALLS ROAD, YANDINA

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Public Works and Local Government—

"(1) Is he aware that the Maroochy Shire Council is holding up the proclamation of resumption of two pieces of land owned by Mr. L. Hutton, Falls Road, Yandina, apparently to avoid payment of compensation on five parcels of land?"

"(2) Is he aware that intention to resume notices were issued on these two parcels of land on December 9, 1960, and March 27, 1961, and that Mr. Hutton cannot obtain a hearing before the Land Court on an appeal against the Council's offer for the full 112½ acres until resumptions are proclaimed on these two parcels?"

"(3) Will he take steps to expedite finalisation of this matter in order that Mr. Hutton's appeal against the Maroochy Shire Council's offer may be heard in the Land Court?"

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset) replied—

"(1 to 3) A Local Authority's powers to take land are contained in the Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1955, which Acts are administered by the Honourable The Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation."

NEW WING, AITKENVALE SCHOOL

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Public Works and Local Government—

"In view of the acute accommodation position, can he give an approximate date for the commencement of the construction of the approved new wing at the Aitkenvale School?"

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset) replied—

"Plans of proposed extensions have recently been completed and referred to the Education Department for consideration. As the estimated expenditure has not yet been approved it is not possible to indicate when the work is likely to be commenced."

PROSECUTIONS FOR OVERLOADING OF VEHICLES

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"(1) In how many cases of overloading of vehicles in excess of a tare weight of two tons have prosecutions been laid during the past six months?"

"(2) In how many of these cases have the drivers of the vehicles, who are not the owners, been prosecuted?"

"(3) In those cases where the driver only has been prosecuted, how many of the vehicles concerned were registered in Queensland?"

"(4) Will he explain the action of his Department in prosecuting employees who must accept directions in relation to loads assigned by their employers?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"(1) 180."

"(2) 154."

"(3) 143."

"(4) The Main Roads Department following the policy generally adopted for many years by other State Road Authorities prosecutes drivers of vehicles committing breaches of the Regulations relating to maximum permissible loads or maximum axle loadings rather than the owners of the vehicles because the weighing of the vehicles and the observations made at the time by the Inspectors provide clear evidence of offences by the drivers. If owners were to be prosecuted, it would be necessary for evidence to be obtained that they caused or permitted the vehicles to be used in contravention of the Regulations. This evidence is difficult to obtain and it does not necessarily follow that every owner is in fact guilty of a breach when the driver is. The driver may not have obeyed instructions or he may have been careless or in the case of axle load breaches, failed to distribute the load on his vehicle to the best advantage. If owners were to be prosecuted as a general rule, enforcement of the Regulations would be virtually impracticable and certainly much more costly."

EXPENDITURE ON MAIN ROADS

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"(1) In view of his reported statement that Brisbane gets too much for roads and the impression that might be conveyed publicly by this rather amazing statement, what was the total amount expended on main roads during the financial year 1960-1961 from revenue from (a) State sources and (b) Commonwealth sources?"

"(2) How much was expended in the metropolitan area of Brisbane from (a) and (b) above either directly or through the Brisbane City Council?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"(1) The expenditure on roads declared under the Main Roads Acts during 1960-1961 was—(a) from State revenue sources, £4,791,272; (b) from Commonwealth sources, £6,440,241; Total: £11,231,513."

"(2) Of the amount of £11,231,513, a total of £128,313 was spent on declared roads in the Brisbane City area. Funds used for individual projects come from the Main Roads Fund as a whole and a dissection into revenue sources is not made. The City Council also received assistance from funds controlled by the Main Roads Department for expenditure on roads not declared under the Main Roads Acts. During the last three years the Labour Government was in power, grants made to the Brisbane City Council from Commonwealth Aid Funds amounted to £97,525 and during the past three years of the Country-Liberal Party Government £201,500 has been allocated to the Council from this source. In addition, an amount of £491,075 has been disbursed to the Council from collections under the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Tax since February 1, 1958. During the last three years of Labour rule, expenditure from the Main Roads Fund in the city area and grants to the Council totalled £467,000. During the last three complete financial years we have been in power—that is, the three years ended June 30, 1961—the comparable figure is £886,000."

Cost of Maintenance and Rent of State Rental Houses

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) What was the amount of revenue received by the Queensland Housing Commission by way of the maintenance component of rentals on State rental houses for the financial year 1960-1961?"

"(2) What was the amount expended on maintenance during the same period?"

"(3) What was the cost of maintenance in the area controlled from Trouts Road, Stafford, project during that time?"

"(4) How many houses are included in that area?"

"(5) In view of recent rental increases of up to 9s. weekly in this area to what extent did (a) increases in Council rates and (b) maintenance create these increased rentals?"

"(6) On how many occasions have rentals on State houses in this area been increased since 1957?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"(1) The total of the maintenance element included in the economic rentals for 1960-1961 is estimated at £274,000. Due to rebates and arrears the revenue received would be less than this figure."

"(2) £290,400."

"(3) It has already grown to £34,665, in what is a growing area with a percentage of quite new houses."

"(4) 1,696 rental homes as at January 31, 1962."

"(5) Average increase in rentals on account of (a) Council rates is 4s. 3d., mainly due to the extension of sewerage, and (b) maintenance is 2s. 9d."

"(6) On the average three."

Operation of Maryborough Fish Board

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) What is the total weight of mullet received by the Maryborough Fish Board this season up to the end of February, 1962?"

"(2) What quantity of mullet received by the Board was graded as 'washed out' mullet from (a) Boonooroo, (b) Hervey Bay and (c) Burrum?"

"(3) What reasons are suggested for the mullet arriving at the Fish Market in this State?"

"(4) (a) Is the competition with imported fish making it impossible for the Board to purchase processed fish at a net price of 8d. per lb. and (b) if so, from which countries is the imported fish being received"

"(5) What are the reasons for the Maryborough market being run at a loss by the Board?"

"(6) (a) Is the freezing equipment at the Maryborough market working as efficiently as desired for the purpose and (b) if not, is it a fact that the equipment cannot be adjusted to enable a sufficiently low temperature to be registered?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"(1 to 6) The question seeks information some of which relates to a period ending at mid-night last night. It is quite impossible for me to obtain that information and answer the Honourable Member's question today. I will obtain the information and I suggest the Honourable Member repeat his question next week."

FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS BY HOUSING COMMISSION AND STEVENSON'S ESTATE, MARYBOROUGH

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) Was a statement made recently setting out allocations made to various centres for the Housing Commission for housing purposes?"

"(2) What were the allocations to each centre and for what purpose were the allocations made?"

"(3) If Maryborough was not included in the list, what would be the reasons?"

"(4) As the Maryborough City Council desires information as to the present position in regard to the opening-up of the Stevenson's Estate in Walker, Kent, Jupiter and Russell Streets by the Housing Commission for the erection of homes, (a) when does he expect negotiations to be finalised, and (b) is the land to be used by the Housing Commission?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"(1 and 2) A statement was made detailing the various centres for which the Housing Commission has called tenders for extra works to stimulate employment in the building and associated industries. These works comprise:—

House construction—

	Houses
Biloela	4
Boulia	1
Brisbane	20
Caboolture	1
Cairns	6
Charleville	5
Cloncurry	3
Cooroy	2
Emerald	3
Gympie	3
Ipswich	31
Julia Creek	4
Kingaroy	5
Kilcoy	2
Mareeba	4
Mundubbera	4
Oakey	2
Redcliffe	7
Richmond	4
Rockhampton	5
Roma	4
St. George	3
Sarina	4
Toowoomba	5
Townsville	13
Warwick	5
Wowan	3
Inala and Acacia Ridge	60

Total: 213 houses.

Painting of State Rental Houses—

(a) External Repainting:

	Houses
Cairns	27
Dalby	7
Holland Park	35
Ipswich	21
Mount Gravatt	84
Murarrie	31
Rockhampton	15
Stafford	23
Toowoomba	20
Yungaburra	6

(b) Internal Painting:

	Houses
Inala	12
Townsville	52

Total: 333 houses.

Sewerage House Connections—Stafford, 86 houses. Roadworks and Drainage—Estates at Manly, Acacia Ridge and Inala. The Townsville City Council has been authorised to make an immediate start on roadworks and drainage at the Commission's Estate at Garbutt."

"(3) The programme was framed on a combination of unemployment record and housing needs. In the case of Maryborough, a recognised sawmilling centre, it is considered that considerable stimulus to employment will flow from the letting of housing contracts in many other parts of the State. However, whilst the Commission is not itself building additional houses in Maryborough, an amount of £20,000 was made available to a Maryborough Building Society. I might add that the Commission holds no high points priority applications for State rental houses at Maryborough."

"(4) (a) The Solicitor-General is awaiting, a reply from Messrs. Stevenson Bros. solicitor in regard to certain matters involved in these negotiations. (b) Yes, as soon as the litigation is cleared up. The land would be available for selection by prospective home-owners who desire houses erected through the Commission to designs chosen by them."

BRIDGE OVER BARRON RIVER AT KURANDA

Mr. GILMORE (Tablelands) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"(1) What is the cause of the delay in the construction of the bridge over the Barron River at Kuranda?"

"(2) When is it anticipated this bridge will be completed?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"(1) Delay was caused in construction of the Kuranda Bridge because the contractor to whom the contract for fabrication of the steelwork was let found it impossible to meet the specified delivery dates and a new contract had to be arranged. Fabrication of steelwork is now proceeding satisfactorily."

"(2) The present anticipated date for completion is October, 1962. However, it may be possible to allow limited use of the bridge before that date and in any case the completion of the bridge is being treated as a matter of urgency."

STATE SCHOOL AT NORTH BOOVAL

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"In view of the Cabinet's decision to allot £850,000 to the Public Works Department for the building of public buildings and schools, will he make the necessary arrangements with the Public Works Department to have a school erected at North Booval on the site purchased by his Department some time ago?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"No indication can be given at this juncture as to when a State Primary School will be established at North Booval on the site held by this Department. The special allocation from Loan Funds is being expended on Educational projects which have a higher priority than the proposal for the construction of the new school at North Booval."

DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING COMMISSION LAND, WONDALL ROAD, MANLY WEST

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"When will work commence on the subdividing of land, including water channelling and roads, on the Queensland Housing Commission land facing Wondall Road, Manly West, for further housing development in that area?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"Subdivisional survey of this estate, which will provide 79 building sites, has been completed and tenders for roadworks and drainage closed last Tuesday, February 27. Tenders received are now under consideration. Adjoining land subsequently acquired will provide a further 47 sites and it is anticipated that development work on this area will be carried out during 1962-1963."

TRAFFIC LIGHTS, LOGAN ROAD, HOLLAND PARK AND UPPER MOUNT GRAVATT

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"Has any definite date been set yet for the installation of traffic lights in the dangerous section of Logan Road, starting at Holland Park shopping centre through to Upper Mount Gravatt shopping centre, which includes a number of pedestrian crossings to schools and shopping centres?"

Hon. K. J. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) replied—

"No."

NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL, BROADWATER ROAD

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"(1) Has the Department purchased a block of ground for the building of a new primary school in the Broadwater Road Queensland Housing Commission estate and adjoining private estate areas?"

"(2) If so, will the new primary school in this area be ready for the intake of pupils for the start of the school year in 1963?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"(1) An area of 9 acres 3 roods 23.1 perches has been resumed for school purposes from Portion 346, Parish of Bulimba. This site is located adjacent to Wishart Road and opposite the Broadwater Road Queensland Housing Commission Estate."

"(2) No indication can be given, at this juncture, as to whether a school will be erected on this site for occupation at the beginning of the 1963 school year."

EXTENSION OF TINAROO SCHEME TO AERODROME TOBACCO-GROWING AREA

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"Owing to the heavy cost of pumping water long distances from the Barron River to farms in the Aerodrome tobacco-growing area and as tobacco farmers are anxious to know when the Tinaroo Scheme will be extended to this area, is it the intention of the Government to service it at an early date and, if so, when will this scheme be commenced?"

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham) replied—

"The extension of the irrigation service to farmers in the Mareeba Aerodrome tobacco-growing area is the subject of a Report to the Government by the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Suppy. The Government is giving consideration to this Report."

MAIN ROADS WORKS FOR RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN MAREEBA, DOUGLAS AND COOK SHIRES

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"Owing to the urgent necessity for the early commencement of Main Roads works in the Mareeba, Douglas and Cook Shires to relieve the unemployment in these areas, what plans has the Main Roads Department in hand for work to be carried out in the respective Shires?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"All funds available to the Main Roads Department are allotted to and expended on urgently required works in accordance with priorities determined by the Local Authorities. The value of schemes released to the Local Authorities concerned in recent months is—Cook Shire, £45,732; Douglas Shire, £15,744; Mareeba Shire, £17,828. The estimated value of further works which it is hoped to release in each area before the end of the financial year is—Cook Shire, £6,000; Douglas Shire, £30,000; Mareeba Shire, £125,000 (including £100,000 for the superstructure of the Barron River Bridge at Kuranda)."

MAIN ROADS WORKS FOR RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN FRESHWATER, REDLYNCH AND STRATFORD AREAS

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"Owing to the number of unemployed in the Freshwater, Redlynch and Stratford areas and the urgent necessity for the early commencement of Main Roads works in the area, when can it be expected that work will be commenced on the forming and sealing of the Brinsmead Road and also the forming and sealing of a short section of main road from the end of the bitumen on the Kamerunga Road to the approaches to the Barron River?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"Plans for the Brinsmead Road are being prepared, and it is hoped to release the scheme to the Council later this financial year. Bitumen surfacing of the Kamerunga Road is provided for in the tentative 1962-1963 programme of works."

MAINTENANCE COSTS AND INCREASED RENTALS, HOUSING COMMISSION HOMES

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) Is it a fact that the Queensland Housing Commission reimburses its funds for any maintenance work carried out to rental homes by re-assessing and increasing the rental following the completion of this work or, in other words, does the Commission charge the tenant for maintenance?"

"(2) Is it true that when a Commission home becomes vacant the rental is increased on an average of 11s. to the incoming tenant?"

"(3) In view of the foregoing, why has the Commission advised tenants that increased maintenance costs have been responsible for the recent increase in rents?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"(1 to 3) The rental formula laid down includes an amount fixed by the Housing Commission to provide for maintenance. The direction is that it shall be an amount which can be varied from time to time, which, in the opinion of the Housing Authority, will be sufficient to provide for reasonable maintenance charges likely to be incurred. The Housing Commission rents are assessed when the house is first constructed. With rising costs, by the time periodical maintenance becomes necessary, it is necessary to reassess the maintenance charged to face up to the higher level of charges. However, to the extent that the previous provision for maintenance was inadequate, the rental cannot be increased to recover that loss. All we can do is predict the future according to the best evidence that we have of the current level of costs. The result is that when a property becomes vacant and is available for reletting, we take advantage of that opportunity to reassess the rent to the new tenant and the adjusted rents of reletting go some distance towards offsetting the under-provision for maintenance. It also brings all current lettings into reasonable parity. If, on reletting, rents were not readjusted, a situation would quickly develop where no-one would want to take the tenancy of a completely new home at the current level of letting if he could secure the reletting of a house that may have been built ten years ago where the original level of rent was much lower than today's. In the light of the increased level of maintenance costs, a considerable number of Housing Commission rentals are being revised. I hope that it will reduce the present gap between what we are outlaying for maintenance and what we are recovering as a component of the rental. I am happy to say that even with these revised maintenance charges, Housing Commission rents remain the most attractive available in the community. In the majority of cases the rental would be little over half what a comparable dwelling would attract on the open market."

RENTS PAID BY PENSIONERS TO HOUSING COMMISSION

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) Is it a fact that the Queensland Housing Commission assesses the rental of a widowed pensioner at amounts varying from 11s. 6d. to 14s. 6d. per week?"

"(2) Is the rental of a married couple who are pensioners assessed at £1 10s.?"

"(3) Does the Commission increase pensioners' rent by an amount equal to twenty per centum of any increase in pensions?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"(1) A sole occupant of a State rental home, erected under the 1945 Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement, whose only income is the widow's pension is charged a weekly rent of 11s. 6d. This applies even if the proper Commission rental might be £3 per week and the house would be worth £5 rent on the open market."

"(2) Yes, provided the pension is their sole income and they occupy a 1945 Agreement house."

"(3) The rent as such is not altered. What happens is that, due to larger income, some of the rebate is lost and the tenant is called on to pay a slightly higher percentage of the full rent. The fall in rebate is not standard. It varies depending on the type of pension received."

INQUIRY INTO ILL-TREATMENT OF ABORIGINALS

Mr. WALLACE (Cairns) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"In reference to my question and his answer thereto on 24 November, 1961, and in view of the advice tendered to the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders Advancement League, will he now in view of the apparent glaring discrepancies as between that advice and the allegations by the youth concerned since the police inquiry, in the interest of British justice and with the view to removing any doubt as to the actual happenings in the case cause an investigation to be carried out by an authority outside the ambit of the Police Force and the Department of Native Affairs?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"The Police Report shows that the native lad Roughsey is still employed and is quite satisfied with his treatment and conditions at the Station and that the incident referred to in Mrs. Pickford's letter was grossly exaggerated and did not amount to an assault at all. The allegations concerning aboriginal Arthur Fourmile are still being investigated. I have no reason to doubt the correctness of the Police findings. If reliable information were to be produced to establish that these findings are not correct and that some further investigation is necessary the matter would be given immediate attention."

DELAY IN HEARING CIVIL ACTIONS IN THE SUPREME COURT

Mr. WALLACE (Cairns) asked the Minister for Justice—

"(1) Since the opening of the Supreme Court in 1962, how many civil actions in that Court have been adjourned because of a shortage of judges?"

"(2) Have not these adjournments caused grave delay, worry, inconvenience and expense to litigants?"

"(3) (a) How many civil actions are presently awaiting hearing in the Supreme Court at Brisbane which have been entered for trial and are not on any deferred list and for which a hearing date has not yet been fixed, (b) what is the cause of this delay and (c) how long does he anticipate it will be before civil actions entered for trial in the Supreme Court at Brisbane can be heard promptly and at the sittings for which they are entered for trial?"

"(4) What is the delay between the time at which a civil action is entered for trial in the Supreme Court at Brisbane and the time when it can be heard?"

"(5) Will he consider the introduction of legislation to provide that Insurance Companies pay interest on damages for the period for which successful plaintiffs have been held out of their just awards because of Court delays?"

"(6) Since the inception of the legal year, has not the Supreme Court been three judges less in strength than it was for the last six months of last year because of the retirement of Mr. Justice Matthews, the death of Mr. Justice Brown and the illness of Mr. Justice Mack? If so, why has no judge been appointed to fill each vacancy?"

"(7) Why has no appointment been made of an acting judge or judges to the Supreme Court to ensure the efficient functioning of that body?"

"(8) Is he correctly reported as suggesting that a Supreme Court judge is not to be appointed at present, but may be appointed in the future?"

"(9) Is there any reason for not now appointing a judge or an acting judge or judges to the Supreme Court?"

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"(1) The total number of civil actions adjourned since the opening of the Supreme Court at Brisbane in 1962 was 23. Adjournments are not always caused by shortages of judges. Many arise from requests of counsel or solicitors to meet the convenience of the parties."

"(2) I have no information before me to indicate that these particular adjournments have caused any greater delay, worry, inconvenience and expense than has been caused by other adjournments that have taken place in earlier years. As a general comment I may say that the objective of the administration is to minimise the delay as far as it is humanly possible to do so."

"(3) There are 200 civil actions presently awaiting hearing in the Supreme Court, Brisbane, which have been entered for

trial and are not on any deferred list and for which a hearing date has not yet been fixed. This figure is not in any way extraordinary. As a general indication of the progress made since this Government took office I give the following comparative figures of the total number of civil actions of the Supreme and Circuit Courts for the Southern District of Queensland awaiting trial as at June 30 and December 31 in each year:—December 31, 1958, 594; June 30, 1959, 609; December 31, 1959, 628; June 30, 1960, 652; December 31, 1960, 494; June 30, 1961, 297; December 31, 1961, 294."

"(4) I understand that the delay which may take place is estimated at approximately six months. It is, however, not possible to predict accurately what the delay will be in any particular case. This may depend on a number of happenings which may take place and which are not predictable."

"(5) Suggestions on these lines have been considered on a number of occasions. On the information at present before me it appears that it would not be in the public interest to introduce legislation as suggested in this question."

"(6) The short answer to this question is 'No'. The Supreme Court at present is at less than its normal strength, but not to the extent as suggested in this question. Mr. Justice Mack has been absent on account of illness for some considerable time and it is not at present known when he will be sufficiently recovered to resume his duties. Mr. Justice Jeffriess, the Northern Supreme Court Judge, has assisted during the current year by carrying out Court duties in Brisbane. The office of President of the Industrial Court, which became vacant as a result of the death of Mr. Justice Brown, has not yet been filled. I would also remind the Honourable Member that the appointment of Mr. Justice Gibbs on June 8, 1961, was not regarded as an addition to the Supreme Court strength, but as an appointment in advance, as Mr. Justice Philp was temporarily absent from Queensland on special duties and as it was known that Mr. Justice Matthews would become due for retirement on attaining the age of 70 years on December 23, 1961."

"(7 to 9) The matter of appointment of a judge or an acting judge, if so required at any time, is one for the Governor in Council. Matters of this kind are considered from time to time in the light of all then facts and circumstances."

ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS AT NORTH ROCKHAMPTON OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL

Mr. THACKERAY (Rockhampton North) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"When will the additional classrooms at the North Rockhampton State Opportunity School be started as no accommodation is available and there is a waiting list of twenty children?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"Plans are in preparation for the provision of additional accommodation for the opportunity school at North Rockhampton. No definite information as to the date of commencement of the additions is available at present."

SEWERAGE AND FENCE AT PARK AVENUE SCHOOL, ROCKHAMPTON

Mr. THACKERAY (Rockhampton North) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"(1) When will the additional sewerage urinal for boys be completed at the Park Avenue State School, Rockhampton?"

"(2) When will the schoolyard fences on the additional playground at the Park Avenue State School be started?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"(1) The District Architect, Rockhampton, has been requested to submit information respecting the provision of improved toilet facilities at this school. No indication can be given, at this juncture, as to when the work is likely to be approved."

"(2) Approval has been given for the acceptance of a local quotation for the construction of tubular fencing to the eastern boundary of the Park Avenue State School grounds and also the boundary of the recently acquired land."

RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN TOWNSVILLE

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"Is there to be any real attempt to relieve the plight of the 1,200 unemployed in Townsville and, if so, when and how will the attempt be made?"

Hon. K. J. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) replied—

"Ministerial and other official announcements published during the past two weeks provide the complete answer to this question. Results will continue to prove and give emphasis to those announcements."

CONNECTION OF BELGIAN GARDENS SCHOOL TO SEWERAGE SYSTEM

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"With further reference to the connecting of the Belgian Gardens State School to the local sewerage system and my representations by questions, asked on September 8, 1960, and March 10, 1961, by speech on October 26, 1961, and by letter dated January 12, 1962, can he now give some definite indication when this necessary connection is to be made?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"The necessary plans for the installation of the sewerage system at the Belgian Gardens State School have been completed and the Chief Quantity Surveyor is at present preparing an estimate of cost for this project. No definite indication can be given at this juncture as to when the actual connection will be made."

NUMBER OF POLICE VEHICLES AND PATROL OFFICERS

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"(1) What is the total number of police vehicles allocated to the various police departments and police stations in Queensland?"

"(2) How many (a) sedans, (b) motor cycles and (c) other types of vehicles are in use at present and what is the total cost of registration and comprehensive insurance?"

"(3) What police stations are presently without a car or other vehicle?"

"(4) How many motor cycle patrol officers are employed at present and has the number of such officers been increased in the last eight months?"

"(5) What liaison exists between the police employed detecting traffic breaches in relation to parkatareas, &c., and the Police Department in general?"

"(6) Does the Minister who is charged with the control and responsibility of the Police Department have any jurisdiction over those police officers allocated to the Traffic Commissioner's Department or is this particular sphere the direct responsibility of the Minister for Labour and Industry?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"(1) The total number of Police Vehicles allocated to the various branches of the Department and Police Stations in Queensland is 509."

"(2) The numbers of vehicles in use at present in the categories quoted are as follows:—(a) Sedans, 278; (b) Motor Cycles, 181; (c) other types of vehicles, 50. The total cost of vehicles at present in use would be approximately £20,000 per annum. It is not possible, without a considerable amount of clerical work, to accurately assess this figure, owing to the large number of vehicles involved which are constantly being sold and replaced, necessitating cancellation of insurance cover on the vehicles sold and obtaining fresh and generally higher cover on the replacement vehicles."

"(3) There are 72 Police Stations presently without a Departmental car or or other official vehicle. However, at 46 of these stations members attached thereto are paid car allowances in consideration for the use of their own private motor vehicles on official Police duties."

"(4) Motor cycle patrol officers are employed in the Traffic Branch, Brisbane, District Hedquarters Stations, and at other larger stations throughout the State. There are some members who are engaged on a permanent basis in this capacity, and others whose duties in this regard could not be regarded as permanent, but only casual. There are 41 permanent motor cycle patrol officers employed at present in the metropolitan area which includes an increase of eight approved for the Traffic Branch as from July 1, 1961. There are 102 solo motor cycle machines used on this type of duty throughout the State."

"(5) The Police employed detecting traffic breaches relating to parkatareas are under the direct control and supervision of the District Superintendent of Traffic at the Traffic Branch, Brisbane, and are responsible to him insofar as conduct and discipline are concerned."

"(6) The Minister charged with the control and responsibility of the Police Departmnet has jurisdiction over those Police Officers allocated to the Traffic Engineer's Department insofar as discipline and conduct are concerned."

COST OF PATROLLING PARKATAREAS

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"(1) How many Morris 850's were purchased for the Traffic Commissioner's Department for the patrol of parkatareas and what was the total cost?"

"(2) What is the estimated cost per week for the running of one of these vehicles, including the wages paid to the drivers and police constables employed?"

"(3) What is the total estimated cost per week for all these vehicles, including wages, &c.?"

"(4) Are the wages that are paid to the constables patrolling these parkatareas a charge against Police Department expenditure and funds or against the allocation of finance to the Traffic Commission?"

"(5) Does he agree with the majority viewpoint that the installation of parkatareas appears to be for the primary purpose of extracting revenue from the already overburdened motorist?"

"(6) How much money has the Government expended on the installation of parkatareas since the inception of the scheme and how much revenue has the Government received from the parkatareas since their installation?"

Hon. K. J. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) replied—

"(1) Five. Total cost, £2,750."

"(2) £45 15s."

"(3) Estimated at £295. This figure includes overhead allowances such as annual leave, sick pay, etc. In consideration of the parkatarea scheme, a very thorough examination was made to ascertain the most satisfactory method of police enforcement of this system. If the traditional methods had been used, i.e., police officers on motor cycles, the cost would have been considerably increased. The area in which parkatarea parking applies is six times as large as the metered parking area. The weekly cost of supervising metered parking is estimated at £250. In the Central Traffic Area, there are about 2½ times as many parkatarea spaces as metered spaces, and at least a similar number of free time limit spaces also exist. If the same method of enforcement were used for parkatarea parking on an area basis the weekly costs would be approximately £1,500, and on a comparison of the number of vehicle parking spaces with metered parking spaces, the cost would be £1,250. It is clear, therefore, that the same method of enforcement for parkatarea parking could not be adopted as with metered parking, unless we were prepared to waste valuable manpower."

"(4) Neither. See Section 44L (9) (b) of the Traffic Acts."

"(5) The Honourable Member bases this part of his question on a false assumption, possibly because the wish is father to the thought. Today, the great majority of motorists are beginning to realise that contrary to the views he expresses, parkatareas are doing a great deal to remove some burdens from the motorists. Throughout the world, traffic congestion in every city costs motorists thousands of pounds. For example, the delays at Story Bridge have been demonstrated to cost motorists £300,000 per year. Therefore, to remove delays, eases the motorists' burden. In November last 100,000 cars entered the city daily. Today, three months later, approximately the same number are entering daily. However, in November of last year over 8,000 cars were daily parked all day in the streets leading to the city, thus causing congestion, particularly for anyone arriving after 9 a.m. Today, only 3,000 are on those streets, the remainder having found off-street parking. The direct consequence of this is that the congestion which was becoming extremely serious has been averted. I might add that quite a number of private organisations are now providing off-street parking and that is very desirable. No doubt the Honourable Member, judging by his question, if he were administering this Department, would not do things for fear of the unpopularity, which, admittedly, were initially unpopular, but which are required. As far as I am concerned, if I believe that certain administrative acts are desirable and will be proved to be so in a reasonable course of time, then at least I have the courage to go ahead, and do the job as I see it."

"(6) Expenditure on installation of parkatareas to February 28, 1962, £52,583 14s. 10d.; revenue to February 27, 1962, £17,338 14s."

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much conversation and too many interjections on my left during the answering of questions.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD

Mr. HANLON (Baroona) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"With reference to the proposed operations of the Totalisator Agency Board, does the Government intend that the same restrictions shall apply to agencies of the board such as the place of business not being within a prescribed distance of a public house or church, windows for conduct of business not opening on to a main street, &c., as apply under the same Act to registered off-course bookmakers?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"The Totalisator Administration Board is holding its first meeting today. I propose to await an opportunity to discuss this matter with the Board before asking the Government to state a detailed policy."

MAINTENANCE OF COMMISSION HOUSES AND INCREASED RENTS, ZILLMERE AREA

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) What amount was spent on maintence on Commission houses in the Zillmere area in the past three years?"

"(2) What is the total rental increase imposed on houses in this area?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

"(1 and 2) The information sought by the Honourable Gentleman is not available and would involve a great amount

of sorting out and calculation. However, the rentals of prefabricated houses at Zillmere have been increased by 6s. a week in the last ten years and are now as follows:—Two-bedroomed house, £2 17s. 6d.. now £3 3s. 6d.; three-bedroomed house, £3 2s. 6d., now £3 8s. 6d., four-bedroomed house, £3 4s., now £3 10s."

SALE OF RAILWAY BUILDINGS, BOYNE VALLEY BRANCH

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) Have any railway buildings been sold at the Littlemore and Nagoorin sidings or stations on the Boyne Valley branch?"

"(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, will he advise (a) was any valuation made by any competent person prior to the disposal of such buildings, (b) what was the floor area of each building sold and wall heights, (c) how much was obtained for each building and (d) what media of advertising were used in inviting tenders for purchase?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"(1 and 2) The following railway buildings surplus to requirements at Nagoorin and Littlemore were sold for removal as a result of offers received for their purchase:—Nagoorin Goods Shed, 280 square feet, height approximately 11 feet, £35! Refreshment Stall, approximately 180 square feet, £15; Littlemore Goods Shed, 600 square feet, height approximately 11 feet, £50. The reasonableness of the offers received having regard to the condition of the buildings was verified by a Station Inspector and confirmed by the Maintenance Engineer of the Division."

PRICES OF PORK AND BEEF

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) asked the Minister for Justice—

"As Minister in charge of price control, can he justify the staggering margin between prices paid to pig and cattle growers for their products and the retail prices of pork and beef, e.g., pork for which the farmer receives 1s. 6d. per lb. is being retailed at 4s. 6d. per lb. and beef for which the meatworks are offering 110s. per 110 lb. is being retailed at an average price of approximately 4s. per lb. in Central Queensland towns?"

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"Without accepting the accuracy of the recitals in the question I furnish the following answer. Pork and beef are not subject to governmental price control. Beef was decontrolled on June 8, 1961. while pork has not been subject to control since September 20, 1948. My views generally with regard to the harmful effects of arbitrary governmental price fixation have been expressed in this House on a number of occasions and in this connection I would particularly refer the Honourable Member to my speech of August 30, 1961, as recorded on pages 139 to 141 of Proof Hansard No. 2 of the 1961-1962 Session. As a brief comment I would point out that fluctuations in retail prices and variations in prices between one locality and another generally follow the trends of wholesale prices and variations in costs; also that prices of pork and beef should not be confused with prices of pigs and cattle. Generally the long term trend in prices inevitably follows the normal working of influences of supply and demand and business competition."

Mr. Burrows interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Port Curtis has tried my patience very severely this morning. Although he may be attempting to increase his popularity with certain hon. members, I can assure him that he has not gained any popularity with me. If he continues in this strain I shall have no hesitation in dealing with him under Section 123A of the Standing Orders.

EXPENDITURE ON BEEF ROADS IN CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"As press publicity has indicated that the State Government has received or will receive a grant for the construction of Beef Roads from the Commonwealth amounting to £5,000,000 and that an amount of £3,340,000 will be made available also for the relief of unemployment—

(1) Are reports true that very little of this money for Beef Roads will be spent in Central Queensland despite the undeniable fact that it has larger cattle figures than either North Queensland or South Queensland?

(2) Will he confirm or deny that Central Queensland will receive only a small proportion of the money allotted for the relief of unemployment, although the serious employment situation requires immediate remedial action?

(3) What will be Central Queensland's share of the allotment for Beef Roads?

(4) What will be the allocation to Central Queensland for the relief of unemployment and in what form or forms will the money be apportioned, i.e., by granting of loans or free grants?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"(1) It is not true that very little of the money will be spent on beef roads in Central Queensland."

"(2) So far as the money allocated to Main Roads Department for relief of unemployment is concerned it will be spent equally in each Division."

"(3) The estimated cost of works (under the £5,000,000 allotment for beef roads) for Central Queensland is £1,990,000."

"(4) This is not a matter which comes within my jurisdiction."

FORM OF QUESTION

Mr. SULLIVAN (Condamine) having given notice of a question—

Mr. DUGGAN: I rise to a point of order. May I respectfully suggest that you apply the same treatment to this question——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that questions will not be allowed if they are not strictly within the Standing Orders. I do not have to be reminded of the fact that I have a duty to perform.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Order in Council under the Labour and Industry Acts, 1946 to 1961.

Order in Council under the University of Queensland Acts, 1909 to 1960.

HARBOURS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair)

Debate resumed from 28 February (see p. 2149) on Mr. Hiley's motion—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Harbours Acts, 1955 to 1959, in certain particulars."

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (11.59 a.m.): The principle of allowing harbour boards and other local authorities generally to invest money that they may have lying idle, as is often the case, is to be commended. The new principle is the brain-child of the Treasurer. Under the Bill harbour boards will now be brought into line in this respect with local authorities.

Too much money is left lying idle in this way in harbour boards and in private businesses. It is remarkable how often one strikes a keen business man who is very efficient in every other line of his business who allows very large sums of money to lie idle to the credit of a current account, earning nothing. It surprises me to see the enormous sums that are held in trust accounts. This is all to the benefit of the banking institutions. I had a case where £1,000 was ultimately paid to a man who was very sorely in need of it, after a period of 10 years. Because inflation was so high, when that £1,000 was paid it represented a very much lower sum than when it was originally left to the beneficiary. It is a pity that the Attorney-General could not examine this question and do something about these large amounts. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in the aggregate there would be £1,000,000 more or less, lying idle throughout the State in solicitors' trust accounts. Anyone who has had any experience with money lying idle must commend this feature of the Bill.

I should not like to give a definite opinion as to the advisability or otherwise of leases, and the loosening of certain restrictions on ministerial approval, on the basis of the information that has been supplied. As my leader said, I should prefer to wait and see the Bill.

Leases generally are dangerous from the lessors' point of view. They invariably favour the lessee. That is a maxim recognised in business. We find that if a company with limited liability is involved, and it defaults, it is useless taking action, for the company has not a penny to bless itself, and no damages can be obtained. However, in the case of the public body it is guaranteed by the Government and, like the Government, it never defaults. Leases always favour the lessee.

Options are more dangerous, and more than leases, they favour the intending lessee. They should be guarded against. I know that the Gladstone Harbour Board, if it had its way today, would be happy to make some other arrangements regarding leases that were entered into by it within the last decade.

I commend to the notice of the Treasurer a report that appeared in the accountancy journal, to which he would be a subscriber, about the harbour board trust litigation that occurred in South Australia. He has probably read it already. It followed a convention held some years ago. Finding the development of the harbour and the port too costly they had to rid themselves of the obligation and it entailed a tremendous amount of litigation. As one who comes from a town that has a port and harbour facilities, I was greatly interested in the report.

With the utmost good faith harbour boards will enter into agreements with people who give them options in the hope that they will be able to capture an industry or do something profitable with a port, but it is found in many cases that only speculators are coming along and taking options with the idea of selling them to others and possibly scalping them. Just as the genuine man must be protected in the renewal of a lease where he may have established goodwill, so a careful watch must be kept to protect harbour boards and the public. Very often the enthusiasm of the harbour board and the local atmosphere can become potentially dangerous in the absence of

restraint or restriction. So I suggest it may be wiser to think the matter over and retain the guidance of the Minister. He is not likely to be carried away with enthusiasm so he will be able to see the pitfalls much more clearly than will the local people responsible for the administration.

Take for example the option that Ampol had over lands in Central Queensland. Had Amoco decided, or been inclined, to establish a refinery at Port Alma or elsewhere in Central Queensland because it offered greater advantages than southern Queensland, the others might have been in a position to say, "We have the option over the land that is available," and they could have cashed in on it without doing a hand's turn to it. Possibilities of that kind have to be considered. Ministerial influence in a paternal way is highly desirable and careful consideration should be given to the matter before relinquishing that influence.

Mr. Aikens: Did you say paternal or fraternal?

Mr. BURROWS: In this case I refer to it as paternal but I do not mean it in the light that the hon. member appears to suggest.

The Bill will probably be an interesting and important one for harbour authorities and others interested in the development and administration of harbours. With my leader I await the opportunity we will have at the end of this debate to read it. I reserve further comment till then.

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (12.9 p.m.): The Minister when introducing the Bill said the harbour boards showed an enlightened approach to securing new industries for the State and its ports. I have no real argument with that statement. It is probably true of most harbour boards, and I know that it is true of the Townsville Harbour Board. They take a particular interest not only in the port but also in the hinterland and the development of it. But, directly or indirectly, the Townsville Harbour Board was not concerned with the development of the tourist industry in Townsville and surrounding areas, and I have brought this matter to the Treasurer's attention in the House before. The board was prepared to dump silt into Cleveland Bay. By its action it drove away people who were prepared to help in developing the tourist industry in Townsville. In one instance, people were prepared to establish an under-water observatory on Magnetic Island. As the under-water observatory at Green Island, outside Cairns, has been such a tremendous attraction for tourists, we believed that a similar observatory would be a considerable attraction in the Townsville area. The Townsville Harbour Board claimed that the silt moved elsewhere when it was dumped, but tests taken showed that it coated the whole of Cleveland Bay and the waters round Magnetic Island. It became obvious to the people concerned that it would be a senseless expenditure of money if the marine life became coated with silt and was destroyed by it.

The harbour board claims that there is a cost factor involved in the dumping of silt in the bay, but the Minister has claimed that the board could quite easily pump the silt back onto land for reclamation purposes. It has spoiled the foreshores of the city around Rowes Bay and right out to Cape Pallarenda. The evidence is there showing what the dumping of silt has done.

The members of the board are not answerable to the people of Townsville. A great number of the citizens of Townsville, including the Tourist Development Association, have raised their voices in protest, and the matter has been brought to the attention of the Treasurer, who says that he is unable to do anything to the members of the harbour board. The Treasurer says that there are only two Government appointees, the other seven coming from local authorities. I believe that if members of the harbour board were directly answerable to the people of Townsville and district, they would show much more civic pride than they do at present in regard to the despoiling of the marine life round Townsville. If the Treasurer is unable to say to the members of the harbour board, "Stop doing what you are doing. Do something about the spoil that you are dumping in the harbour. Put it elsewhere.", and if he is unable to bring pressure to bear on them, he should amend the Act and make the members of the board answerable to the people. If they were, I believe that the dumping of silt would stop immediately. I suggest that the Act should be amended to make the members of the harbour board answerable to the people of Townsville and its hinterland.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (12.14 p.m.): I am glad that the hon. member for Townsville North has raised that particular point. It has been dealt with in the House previously, and I think the Treasurer told us, in effect, that the Townsville Harbour Board for some years had acted in studied contempt of the recommendations made by Mr. Fison, the chief engineer of the Department of Harbours and Marine, and was just going on its own merry way.

As to the suggestion made by the hon. member for Townsville North that the harbour board members be directly elected, it was only until recently that they were directly elected by the people. I have no doubt that if they were directly elected by the people that the T.C.A. mob would still put Angus Smith and Charlie Butler there, and they would go on their merry way. The fact is that the Townsville people have only two representatives on the board, which is constituted of seven or nine members—I am not sure of the actual number. The other members are not interested at all in what happens to Townsville as a tourist resort.

In many respects the Townsville Harbour Board has done a magnificent job. I must give them full credit for that. Only quite recently I discussed with officers and members of the board the reason why they did not reclaim that very fine reclamation area on the south side of Ross Creek. First of all, an external rock wall was built. Then the area was filled in by lorries carting loads of sand and soil. I put it to them, "Why didn't you pump your silt from your dredge barges into this area?" Their statement to me was that the silt was too fine, that it would not settle. They said that if they pumped it into the area that had been made by the building of the external rock wall the back water would just run over the external wall back into the creek again. I should like to have an engineer's opinion on that. I know that in Cairns they have reclaimed huge areas of land by pumping the silt from their dredge barges onto low-lying land. Wonderful reclamation work has been done there. I am still to be convinced that it cannot be done in Townsville. I am not trying to make any political capital out of this, but it is a matter that has been raised by many organisations and many people with the interests of Townsville at heart. By dumping dredge silt in Cleveland Bay the harbour board is despoiling the whole of the Cleveland Bay area and the whole of Magnetic Island as well. Very shortly Magnetic Island will not be worth a tuppenny damn as a tourist resort if something is not done to prevent the harbour board dumping their silt and spoil in Cleveland Bay.

The next matter I wish to speak about also impinges on the harbour board. It was about this matter that I proposed to speak had I got the call before the hon. member for Townsville North. I am glad now that I did not get the call beforehand because it gives me the opportunity to join with him in again appealing to the Treasurer or somebody to do something to stop the Townsville Harbour Board dumping their spoil in Cleveland Bay.

Quite recently, perhaps a year or two ago, the Treasurer entered into an agreement with Hayles Magnetic Island Ltd. that he would build out of Commonwealth funds provided for the purpose a big public jetty at Picnic Bay on Magnetic Island. I understand that Hayles had to build a big public jetty at Arcadia on Magnetic Island. I do not want to intrude onto the area that is under the political jurisdiction—if I could term it as such—of the hon. member for Townsville North, but it is a public jetty, and, of course, it is used extensively by people from my electorate who go over to Magnetic Island. They have their huts there. They take their children over at week-ends and for school holidays. It is a very fine jetty at Picnic Bay. I say that we all owe a debt of gratitude to the Treasurer for having had it constructed there. However, I received complaints that when the Magnetic Island boats pull over, the passengers cannot get off the boat onto the jetty, or the pier-head—call it what you like—because the whole area is cluttered up with motor vehicles. Therefore I decided to go over and investigate the matter myself. I went over one day and sure enough when we got off the boat—luckily it was high tide—there was only a very narrow passageway about 3ft. wide between a bus and a truck. There were other motor vehicles on the jetty. The passengers had to sort of thread their way through the maze as they got off the boat onto the pier-head and walked along the pier or jetty to the shore. There was a policeman stationed there. I asked him about the control of the traffic on the jetty. He said, "Mr. Aikens, I have not got any control at all. I cannot even go on the jetty as a policeman to control traffic. I can control it here but I have no authority to control the traffic on the jetty." I said, "What is the trouble?" He said, "The trouble is that there are many Magnetic Island residents who go over to town for the day or for the night who are too blasted lazy." He did not use those words. I am using those words; I do not want to put the policeman in. He said, "They drive their cars or utility trucks right out along the jetty and park them there for the day or night, or two or three days if they stay in town for two or three days."

Consequently, when the public transport vehicles go out—and I am sure the Treasurer or anybody else would have no objection to their going out, buses, a reasonable number of taxis and cars that go out to bring the stuff off the boat to the shops and other premises on Magnetic Island—because of these parked cars jammed onto the pierhead, they cannot get to the pierhead.

I was out there on a dull day, a Tuesday, and even then there was a utility that had been parked there all the morning while the owner went over to town. It stayed there all day and when he came home in the afternoon, on the 4 o'clock boat, he just got into his utility at the pierhead and drove away.

An A.L.P. Member: They have no parkatareas there?

Mr. AIKENS: They have no parkatareas or meters there. This is causing congestion and even hardship and inconvenience to everybody concerned. I wrote to the Treasurer at length about it and he sent me a very courteous reply, but it now transpires that the Treasurer just cannot give the Picnic Bay, Magnetic Island jetty away to anybody. He apparently first offered it to the harbour board and they rejected it with scorn and derision.

Mr. Hiley: It was never offered to the harbour board.

Mr. AIKENS: I should like the Treasurer to clearly explain this matter as there is

much conjecture and talk regarding it. Apparently he offered it to the Townsville City Council.

Mr. Hiley: There was a very good offer to the Townsville City Council.

Mr. AIKENS: Why not to the harbour board?

Mr. Hiley: The harbour board would not have any staff over there. It would be a nuisance to the harbour board. It is the council who control that area.

Mr. AIKENS: Why does not the Treasurer take the very simple procedure of declaring the jetty a public highway and giving the policeman on Magnetic Island control of the traffic on it? That is a simple solution to the traffic problem. He told me that the only persons who would have anything to do with the control of the jetty would be the Department of Harbours and Marine. We have a very good harbourmaster in Townsville but he cannot be over there all the time looking after the Picnic Bay jetty. I suggest to the Treasurer that, while he is still haggling with the Townsville City Council as to whether or not they will take control of it he declare the Picnic Bay jetty a public road and so give the policeman control of the traffic on it. That would solve the traffic problem.

I understand that the Treasurer has offered the Picnic Bay jetty to the Townsville City Council and they are shying away from it as they would from a typhoid carrier. First of all, they say, "If we take control of the jetty at Picnic Bay on Magnetic Island, who will be responsible for the maintenance and lighting?"

Mr. Hiley: They have been told that the maintenance and lighting are our responsibility. They know that quite clearly.

Mr. AIKENS: And they are still haggling?

Mr. Hiley: The last I heard they were going to take it, but they are a bit like a reluctant virgin—they need an awful lot of wooing.

Mr. AIKENS: To describe some aldermen of the Townsville City Council as virgins of any type is the greatest play on words we have heard in this Chamber for many years. I will not develop that point; I will not give hon. members the bushman's very clear description of a virgin. I will tell somebody that later on. What I want to know is what is going to be done with regard to the control of parking? Frankly, I am not concerned so long as there is someone to open up the lanes of traffic and see that traffic on the jetty is kept under reasonable control. What is going to be done about these all-day parkers on the jetty?

Mr. Hiley: When you sit down I will tell you.

Mr. AIKENS: If the Treasurer will tell us about that I am quite happy. It is causing a lot of concern. I ask hon. members to put themselves in Gilligan's place. He takes his wife and children and their picnic baskets and all the paraphenalia and dunnage over to Magnetic Island. Some people take everything bar the kitchen sink to Magnetic Island and when they get to the jetty head they have to thread their way through a maze of vehicles on the jetty. I again say that some of the public vehicles such as buses and taxis and so on should have a right on the jetty, but it is not right that every resident of Magnetic Island should be permitted to park vehicles up to the jetty head at Picnic Bay with impunity and leave them there all day, all night, and sometimes for two or three days.

If the Treasurer will give us in his usual lucid style information as to what is going to happen to the Picnic Bay Jetty, I shall be happy to hear it, and I am sure the hon. member for Townsville North will be happy to hear it too.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (12.27 p.m.), in reply: A number of interesting matters have been raised. Perhaps it might be better for the continued interest of those who have been in the Chamber in the last few minutes to deal first with those matters affecting Townsville.

I shall take first the subject of silt. It is perfectly true that my technical officers are convinced, and they have said it bluntly and plainly, that the dredging practices at present carried on in the port of Townsville are helping to spoil the beaches at Pallarenda and around the foreshores of Cleveland Bay. That is our conviction. We have had a series of discussions on this matter. Every time I go to Townsville the subject is discussed. I say to them, "When are you going to do something about this question of silt that is spoiling the foreshores of Cleveland Bay?" They deny that the dumping of silt plays any part in spoiling those beaches and we cannot prove it. All we can go on is that the beaches were at one time beautiful clean beaches with live coral growing off them. It is only in recent years since dredging has commenced and the spoil has been deposited in the bay that the foreshores have been spoiled and the coral has died. There is no question about that, but that does not deny the possibility of some change in the ocean currents that has reversed what has been the tendency over the years. All I say is that on my cursory examination all the evidence is against the Townsville Harbour Board. I have said so, and I have told the Board I think it would be wise to pump in the silt for reclamation work. It has been reluctant to take the advice until recently. The hon. members from Townsville will probably know it, but the Townsville Harbour Board now has a plan for development. It is one of the Boards that is really keen on developing the

harbour foreshores and attracting industry to the port. There is not much land left on the headland. The proposal is to go south or west, I suppose it is, of the present main breakwater.

Mr. Aikens: South.

Mr. HILEY: South, and to take the retaining wall from the butt of the present southern embankment right down to the entrance to Ross River. It is to do that work, I believe, in two stages. The proposal has not yet been finalised. The first stage will probably be the section down to that little creek from which circulating water is obtained for the condensers. That will have to be bridged with a proper roadway and traffic bridge. It will be a ticklish engineering job. The final section will be to the entrance of Ross River.

The cheapest and best source of filling for this work is undoubtedly the abundant sand banks that lie just off the foreshore. They contain any amount of spoil. It is beautiful, firm, clean silt. It will be pumped in there and the area will be useful almost immediately.

Mr. Aikens: All the oil installations at Townsville are built on land reclaimed with silt.

Mr. HILEY: Yes. It is clean and firm and is the best material. But suction dredge spoil is material in an entirely different category. It is simply fine, powdered mud, and every time it is wet it oozes and runs everywhere. However, experience has shown that if that material is mixed with enough sand a very solid fill is obtained. The foundations are then adequate for a building of a decent size. If you get a big area and make a basin, with a wall round it, and fill the silt in you will have mud there that will never dry out. You get a crust on top, and as soon as you go through the crust, down underneath there is oozing mud forever. It is not a simple problem. I had a very long conference with the Townsville Harbour Board on the occasion of the opening of the new wharf, about four or five months ago. The members then outlined to me what was in their minds, and I gathered on that occasion that it is their hope that as part of the filling that will take place there they will be able to put the bulk of their suction dredge spoil there and mix it with the sand coming in from the banks outside, so the problem will be positively approached. I was relieved to hear that. I repeat what I have said on previous occasions: the Government do not want to do what we are so often accused of doing. We do not want to try to impose Queen Street will over decentralised units of local government. It is our view that you have to be prepared to allow local people occasionally to do things you disagree with, and let them make mistakes occasionally. The only alternative to that is to assume that we are always right and they are always wrong and to impose our will against the will of local interests. That is not our view. We told these people that we think they should pump this for reclamation and that they should not discharge it into the open sea. Unless it is very clear I hesitate to tell local people—in effect, local government—that they have to do what they are told by the central administration.

Mr. Tucker: You have let these people of the area impose their will on the harbour board.

Mr. HILEY: If the hon. member cares to examine that particular board he will get an awful shock because he will find that the main protagonists in the harbour board for election by the people are the people who most bluntly oppose the soil for pumping reclamation. The hon. member is backing the wrong horse there, I can assure him.

The other matter raised was the jetty at Picnic Bay. I wish the Committee to remember what we have done. Until we started building these jetties, all of them were the responsibility of the local authorities. They had to build them, borrow the money to construct them, maintain them, and supervise them. They were Council jetties. For the first time, we started to use State funds to build public jetties. When we build them, it is not a subsidy; it is a straight out gift to the locality. I have said to the councils, "Now, we are taking the burden of building the jetty off your shoulders. If you have an existing jetty we will take the responsibility of maintaining it off your shoulders, and, in turn, you look after the local supervision." We cannot employ staff to be simultaneously supervising jetties from Thursday Island to Coolangatta. We have taken the capital cost and the maintainance cost off the shoulders of the local authorities.

Mr. Aikens: And the lighting?

Mr. HILEY: Yes, it is fair that the local authority should control the sort of thing that the hon. member mentioned.

The hon. member for Redcliffe knows that his council gladly accepted. Now we are building them a jetty at Scarborough, and we are rebuilding the jetty at Woody Point, entirely at our cost. The hon. member does not say here, "We are going completely out of it. We will not supervise it." The Redcliffe City Council has its inspectors to administer that without any trouble. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. Houghton: That is right.

Mr. HILEY: We did the same at Tin Can Bay, and the Widgee Shire Council gladly made the same arrangement. They have been a bit reluctant about it at Townsville, but I formed the opinion during my last visit that their objections had been overcome, and that they would play ball and take charge.

Mr. Aikens: Will that include the control of the traffic?

Mr. HILEY: Yes, of course it will. The jetty will be entirely in their care. I take a very dim view of local people, whose interests the jetty serves, abusing that privilege by all day parking on the jetty for even one day, let alone three days.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr. HILEY: I heard about it. I was told about it.

Mr. Tucker: I wrote to you about it.

Mr. Houghton: We had the same trouble but we soon eliminated it with our by-laws.

Mr. HILEY: The city council is the ideal body to handle it. It has the staff; its members are local people and they know the local conditions best.

Mr. Aikens: Would they have the right to handle the traffic on the jetty over the police?

Mr. HILEY: They will have to examine that. If they want to they can prohibit vehicles on the jetty. One of the jetties in the hon. member's area has a chain across the roadway with a padlock on it and no vehicle is allowed on. I am not very keen on the idea of having vehicles running onto jetties and particularly congesting them.

Mr. Houghton: They used to run out onto the Redcliffe jetty at 50 miles an hour.

Mr. HILEY: No doubt hon. members will recall the incident on one of the tourist jetties where a couple of walkers were pushed into the water and drowned.

Mr. Aikens: One was killed.

Mr. HILEY: Yes.

Mr. Aikens: The Townsville jury let the driver off.

Mr. HILEY: Still, that is the trouble. I do not like having vehicles on jetties at all and I hope that the Townsville City Council will respond to my invitation to take over the control of that jetty. Then it will have full power to do what every other council up and down the coast is gladly doing.

The other matter raised was the power to lease. The hon. member for Port Curtis spoke of taking away what he called the paternal ministerial supervision of lease contracts. The only proposal contained in the Bill in that regard is to remove the necessity for inviting public tenders. Where the lease is for a period longer than one year the harbour board must get ministerial approval for it, and it must get ministerial approval of any assignment of the ownership of the lease and of any change in the purpose or use of the building that is leased. That is retained.

The amending provision was included in the Bill following two requests. The first came from the Harbour Boards Association in 1958 when they sought an amendment to give them the right of renewal of lease to tenants of long standing without calling tenders. On that occasion they said to me, "You let a building originally. You call your tenders and somebody establishes a business there. After five or 10 years the lease comes up for renewal and you have to call public tenders for it once more. The tenant has had that building and he has established quite a valuable business there with a considerable public following. It is easy to realise his position. Any one of his competitors can have the rent shot up on him if he stays, or succeed against him if he does not match him, and steal his business site." That is the position if you compel the calling of public tenders on all occasions.

The other instance that led to the inclusion of the provision was that representations were made by the Cairns Harbour Board in 1959. They had a proposal from Amagraze to take over one of their wharf sheds to install very expensive refrigeration equipment so that they would hold in refrigerated storage right at the wharf shed alongside the ship a very considerable tonnage of frozen beef. Amagraze said, very rightly, "If we are going to spend this huge sum of money to install refrigeration on this basis, we want some security of tenure. It would be an impossible position for us if all we could get was a short-term lease and if in five years' time anyone could come along and, by bidding a few pounds more than we think is the proper rent, take our lease away from us."

I remind the hon. member for Port Curtis that Gladstone faced exactly the same position with the new fish-freezing venture of Afex. Those people have installed a magnificent plant in a wharf shed there. It is well worth a visit from any hon. member who goes to Gladstone. If they were to be exposed to the necessity to call public tenders the next time the lease comes up for renewal, any competitor could come along and either put the whip on their backs for an excessive rent or succeed in stealing their business site from them. That is what public tendering does in such an instance.

The fourth matter that influenced me was the instance that I think I have mentioned in this Chamber previously—the case in which it seemed possible that we would obtain a great new industry for Gladstone in the smelting of nickel. The people in the particular industry were being displaced on a political basis from their traditional source of supply in Cuba, following the uprising there. Those people, in coming round the world, insisted that they must be able to negotiate a deal with complete secrecy attached to it, and I think the hon. member for Port Curtis will agree that that was a secret that was exceedingly well kept.

Mr. Burrows: Yes.

Mr. HILEY: The harbour board knew it, and we were prepared to make a firm deal on which there was no basis of a public tender. We simply had to work out what was a fair charge for the area they wanted and make it available to them on a non-competitive basis. If the negotiations had succeeded, we should have got a new industry for the Gladstone area and new trade for the port. That is the sort of problem that we faced.

Mr. Burrows: No public tenders were invited originally for any of the leases that I know of in Gladstone. I am not condemning that, because they had to grasp the opportunity.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly. In other words, this Bill will provide for much the same procedure as has been applied to the Hamilton Lands Committee. It is a negotiated basis.

Mr. Burrows: From memory, the Shell Company pays £25 or £35 for the area it has.

Mr. HILEY: Of course, the company paid for the reclamation of the land that was originally mud flats over which the tide came in and went out. That is the background to that.

The hon. member for Port Curtis raised the position of a member of the board who could come under disqualification because of his interest in a profit on a contract with the board where the contract was let to him in his personal capacity. In drawing a distinction he said, "How foolish it is. All the man has to do is form a company and he is not affected." That is not quite the position. If he is a senior executive officer or a shareholder in the company where the company has an interest in a contract with the board, I emphasise that the Harbours Act provides that if a member of the board has any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in any contract, proposed contract or other matter and is present at a meeting of the harbour board at which the contract, proposed contract or other matter is the subject for consideration, he shall at the meeting disclose the interest and take no part in the consideration or discussion or vote on any question relating to the matter. Indirect pecuniary interests include membership of or employment with a company with which the contract is proposed to be made. I think that the present law deals fairly effectively with that position and it is not as simple and easy to evade the prohibition of personal contracting with the board as the hon. member might assume. I think that has occurred in many other spheres and in many other ages. The law has been carefully worked out to provide a fairly good safeguard, so even if a person is working for a company or is interested in a company, he cannot thereby escape the prohibition on personal dealings.

Mr. Burrows: There is a difference between where it is a person and where it is a company.

Mr. HILEY: There is a difference, but the person has to disclose his interest and he cannot evade it.

Mr. Burrows: He can cover himself by notifying the board when he is appointed that he is interested in these matters. He need not necessarily repeat that at every meeting.

Mr. HILEY: I am not too sure about that. Under the Companies Act it can be made by a general declaration that is recorded and passed for all time; but on the note I have here, it appears to me that he shall at the meeting disclose the interest. At any rate, I will check on it and let the hon. member know.

I think that deals with all the matters raised. In the light of the reasons for bringing down the abolition of the public tendering practice, when hon. members of the Committee have a look at the wording of the Bill I do not think they will be unhappy about it. I am quite content to leave it, as they do, for a matter of judgment after they have had an opportunity to study it.

Motion (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Hiley, read a first time.

FIRE BRIGADES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair)

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga—Minister for Health and Home Affairs) (12.48 p.m.): I move—

> "That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Fire Brigades Acts, 1920 to 1959, in certain particulars."

The Bill contains no far-reaching or contentious provisions, the amendments contained therein having been shown to be necessary through the experience of departmental administration. The most important amendment is designed to provide for such contingencies as a fire insurance company going into liquidation or being taken over or merged with another company. It was never contemplated that an insurance company would go into liquidation and the present structure of the Act makes no provision for the collection of the fire brigade contribution payable by such a company in the event of its being sold or forced into liquidation.

There is before my department at the present time a case of this nature, of which I shall furnish the House with full details during the second reading stage. At the

moment it is sufficient to state that the proposed amendment is intended to provide for the contingencies I have referred to.

Other provisions of the Bill deal with the question of representation of local authorities on fire brigade boards and qualifications for election to a fire brigade board.

There are a number of cases where a local authority which contributes the major portion of the local authorities' share of the cost of maintaining the fire brigade service, could be deprived of representation on the board because of the preponderance of voting power in the outside shires which might make only a small contribution to the cost of the fire-fighting service. The proposed provision will enable cases of this nature to be suitably provided for.

The residential qualifications in connection with membership of a Board are intended to obviate the possibility of a Fire Brigade Board being dominated by representation from outside the district, and by persons who have no community of interest in the locality. These provisions will be explained in more detail in my second reading speech.

The Bill will provide that fire brigade boards may adopt a superannuation scheme to cover their full-time employees. This has been sought by fire brigade boards and by the employees' representatives over a long period of years. The principle of superannuation for employees of government and quasi-governmental bodies has come to be accepted as these employees are in the nature of career workers and they cannot readily transfer to any other type of occupation.

Other provisions in the Bill deal with financial aspects, such as the setting up of a working reserve to enable fire brigade boards to have adequate finance to carry on their functions during the first two or three months of the new financial year. Under the present financial structure a fire brigade board is unable to levy precepts or to collect the fire insurance contribution until after the lapse of at least two months of the financial year. The new provision will remove the Boards' difficulties in this respect.

The other financial provision is for the setting up of a capital reserve fund into which can be paid the proceeds of land and premises which may from time to time have to be discarded by fire brigade boards in favour of larger or more suitably situated premises.

By allowing a board to pay the proceeds of any such sale into a capital reserve fund, the board's loan requirements for any new premises would be considerably reduced, thus effecting substantial savings in interest and redemption.

Mr. Lloyd: What happens to that money from property that is sold now?

Dr. NOBLE: This will not apply very frequently. It is designed largely to help the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board. As the hon. member knows they are going to sell their main premises in Ann Street, and, instead of that money reverting back into ordinary revenue, it can be held in this trust fund and used for future building projects with loan fund.

Mr. Dewar: It will save loan funds.

Dr. NOBLE: That is so. The Bill also will give fire brigade boards power to invest surplus funds in the short term market or in some other field of investment. It sometimes happens that fire brigade boards, when raising money by the sale of debentures, have large credit balances temporarily unused in the loan fund account. Similarly a board could have a large amount of money in its general fund following the receipt of the fire insurance contribution and local authority precept which would not immediately be required.

The amendment will enable a Board to place these funds out on investment in order to obtain the maximum amount of interest to offset loan charges or to increase the board's revenues.

Power is taken in the Bill to provide for an alternative means of dividing between the component local authorities the contribution payable by such local authorities to a fire brigade board. At the present time it is mandatory that such contribution be divided on a ratable value basis.

Under this arrangement anomalies can arise, and have arisen. For example there are fire brigade districts which, in addition to the large provincial towns, also contain smaller outlying towns so that a fire fighting service for those smaller towns can be under the supervision and control of experienced and competent officers of the provincial fire service.

Taking Roma and Injune as an example, Injune wants a fire service. Roma is the main centre and Injune will come under the supervision and control of Roma.

The cost of maintaining these outlying fire stations is usually very much in excess of the proportionate contribution made by the outside local authority to the fire brigade fund. As a result, existing fire brigade authorities are reluctant to extend their activities to take in these smaller towns because of the anomalous financial set up which will result.

The new provisions will enable an alternative method to be declared in any particular district, removing existing or future anomalies.

There are a number of minor amendments in the Bill dealing with election procedures, recovery of moneys by fire brigade boards and other small matters which will be dealt with in greater detail during the second reading.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (12.55 p.m.): The Bill clarifies the organisation of the fire brigade boards, bringing it into line with

modern requirements. The authority being given to boards to invest funds is in accordance with the general trend. Semi-governmental institutions are now able to invest a proportion of their surplus funds or working funds in the short-term market. As long as the funds are put into gilt-edge investments such as Government or semi-government loans, there can be no great objection to the practice, particularly when the money is not required by the organisation for immediate use.

The other provisions outlined by the Minister seem to be necessary, but I shall examine them thoroughly before the second reading stage.

As the Minister said, a superannuation scheme has been needed for many years, and the provision of the Bill will bring fire brigades into line generally with private and governmental organisations that have adopted superannuation schemes. Difficulties were experienced at the early stage of negotiations, but apparently they have been resolved and the introduction of a superannuation scheme will no doubt be welcomed by all permanent employees of fire brigade boards.

In these days much emphasis is placed on civil defence. In recent years many homes for the aged, orphanages for children, and other establishments are being built by organisations with the assistance of funds from the Government. Many people have been concerned about the lack of legislation in Queensland covering fire precautions, and many such buildings are being erected with inadequate safeguards. I suggest to the Minister the appointment to the Fire Brigade Board of a highly qualified engineer with some control or authority over buildings throughout the State. Even with the State divided into separate regions, a highly qualified engineer with a knowledge of overseas and local practices could endeavour to bring about uniformity in different local authority areas. The precautions insisted on by local authorities vary from district to district. For instance, the precautions required in the city of Brisbane may be different from those required in Toowoomba. The danger from fire is made greater because of the fact that some of the buildings are not constructed of fire-proof materials. The requirements of one local authority may in the view of that local authority be sufficient, but on overseas or even southern standards the precautions insisted on by the local authority may not be nearly adequate. The appointment of a fire engineer under the control of the Fire Brigade Board would mean greater safety not only for the public but for those who are accommodated in these buildings.

An investigation was carried out recently. I shall not mention the names because I have not the full details, but I am assured that many of the homes for the aged come within this category. Although they may be built according to local-authority requirements they do not provide adequate safety for aged people, people close to hospitalisation, or young children who are housed too closely. If strict engineering practice on fire precautions was applied, it may be found that many of the homes for boys and young girls would to some degree be overcrowded, although in fact according to health requirements they could not be said to be overcrowded. When requirements as to precautions are prescribed, they should be uniform throughout the State. Uniformity could be achieved if a fire engineer was appointed by the Fire Brigade Board. He could lay down certain regulations covering precautions that have to be taken and this would lead to greater safety for inmates. It has been rather astonishing that the people who are paying precepts to the fire brigade board, the insurance companies, the local authorities and even the State Government, have not seriously considered all aspects of fire precautions in buildings and in ordinary living conditions. I have mentioned that in recent years there has been a growth in the number of convalescent homes, and homes built by churches and Governments for the housing of people. There has also been a growth in the number of people who are privately converting older large homes into establishments for caring for the aged. That growth raises the problem of whether there is sufficient management precaution against fire in these buildings. It appears to me that a very serious danger to life is growing, with the hazards to life that arise in any outbreak of fire in establishments housing a great number of people. Uniform precautionary methods for combating fire could well be set down and this could be made one of the duties of the board.

I mentioned that insurance companies do not seem to be greatly interested. This may be because the premiums paid by the insurees for their insurance policies have been sufficient to allow the companies to pay any costs involved in fire insurance and at the same time make their profits. It seems that they are not greatly concerned with the danger to life as the result of a fire. They are concerned mainly with whether they are securing sufficient premiums to make a profit on the policies that have been issued. I do not say they are not at all concerned, but I think that we, as ordinary humanitarian people, should try to ensure that there is very little danger from fire. I believe that Governments and local authorities should be greatly concerned about the danger to the community from fire.

Because of the changes in the past four or five years, and the assistance granted by subsidies for such homes, churches and governmental institutions and private people have been extending their activities and building homes for the aged, in particular. There has been a good deal of activity in Brisbane by people converting old buildings

into homes for the aged. There has never been great concern about providing fire protection.

Mr. Hiley: The council is vitally interested in that.

Mr. LLOYD: I have spoken on that point. There should be a fire engineer appointed for the whole of Queensland, perhaps attached to the Fire Brigade Board, who would provide some uniformity in local authority areas. Quite extensive precautions are taken in the Brisbane City Council area when new buildings are constructed. However, these same precautionary measures are not taken with older buildings. In another local authority area the measures taken may be entirely different and completely inadequate. Even in Brisbane the superintending of fire precautions by the local authority is not adequate. In many cases not enough study is given to the problem and it is reaching serious proportions. We must remember that in the last decade or so the whole picture of living has changed. We have entered the era of nuclear weapons which has brought with it far greater problems than ever before and it calls for a complete change in our thinking.

There is a definite need for the appointment of a qualified man to study fire precautions both from the local point of view and from the point of view of what is happening in other parts of the world. Geographical location might dictate different methods. Queensland might, for instance, pose different problems from Tasmania. Through lack of interest by people who pay fire brigade precepts we seem not to have had the concentration on the problem that it warrants and I hope the Minister will give it the most urgent consideration. I urge him to have a study made, perhaps by his own departmental officers, of the precautions being taken in many of the older buildings that are being converted. In many ways lack of interest may be creating a serious danger to life. I appreciate tthe latitude you have given me, Mr. Taylor, but the importance of the matter cannot be overstressed.

Some of the other provisions of the Bill seem reasonable on the surface. Some of them will call for a closer scrutiny when we see the Bill, and at the second-reading stage we will indicate more definitely our attitude to those matters.

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga—Minister for Health and Home Affairs) (2.22 p.m.), in reply: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke of the need for a fire engineer. I suppose the Superintendent of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board could be regarded as quite an efficient fire engineer.

Mr. Lloyd: But he is loaded with administrative responsibilities.

Dr. NOBLE: To be quite honest, we agree that there may be room for a good deal of reform in the management of the fire brigade system in Queensland. I have asked the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board and my own officers to study the matter and we hope when we are returned to office next year to carry out many of the decisions they will reach in the meantime. Whether it will be necessary to have a special fire engineer supervising building construction and the like will depend upon their advice.

I think the hon. gentleman has not the right slant on the matter of old people's homes. Those that are subsidised—hospitals and old people's homes and so on built by the churches and other charitable organisations —are well supervised not only by my department but also by the Commonwealth department. However, there are places in the metropolitan area and elsewhere throughout the State known as convalescent homes and their standards are more or less controlled by local authorities. They serve a very useful purpose in housing quite a few aged people. Admittedly some money from the Commonwealth Hospitals Fund goes to them so my inspectors have been visiting them in the last month or so in order to obtain a true picture of their standards. It might be possible, and it might be advisable, later to introduce regulations to control those standards. I have been informed that some do not come up to standard. They are overcrowded and they have not enough toilet accommodation for the number of patients, and so on, but a large proportion of them are very good. I should be loth to see these places closed.

Mr. Lloyd: I do not think I suggested that.

Dr. NOBLE: No, the hon. member did not. They are serving a useful purpose in the community. We may be able to introduce regulations—I understand that it can be done by regulation—to control the standard of convalescent homes and ensure the safety and proper care of the patients who go there.

I thank the House for the way in which the Bill has been received. It is really a Bill dealing with administration.

Motion (Dr. Noble) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Dr. Noble, read a first time.

BABINDA SUGAR WORKS ACT OF 1924 REPEAL BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair)

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (2.27 p.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to repeal the Babinda Sugar Works Act of 1924."

The Act provided, amongst other things, for the formation of a company or association to take over the Babinda Sugar Works from the Corporation of the Treasurer, the purchase price being the capital cost of such works as at 1 July, 1924. The price was treated as a Government loan, which was repayable.

The company, which was styled the Babinda Central Mill Co. Ltd., was required to observe certain conditions, all obviously drawn to protect the Treasurer's security in the works pending the company's repaying the cost. One such condition was the need to obtain the consent of the Governor in Council to any proposed alterations to the company's memorandum, articles, or rules. Although it was not specifically stated that this condition was to apply only during the currency of the loan, that was the obvious intention.

I can report now to the Committee that the company has fully liquidated its debt and that the Act has completely fulfilled its purposes—hence the proposal now before the House to repeal the Act.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (2.29 p.m.): There is no need for me to discuss the Bill at great length. With your generosity, Mr. Taylor, I should like to mention one or two serious things that have occurred to co-operative sugar mills in Queensland in the past. From what the Treasurer said, I take it that this is a co-operative mill.

Mr. Hiley: I think it is; I will make sure of that.

Mr. LLOYD: Co-operative mills have a long history in Queensland. In one instance —I am referring to the mill at Mossman in North Queensland—the formation of the mill was dependent upon the cane-growers of the area mortgaging to the mill their own land and being shareholders according to the area of land so mortgaged.

As time went on much of the land passed from hand to hand. Because of the size of his property a man might have held about 10 shares in the first place under the loan guaranteed by the Government. From time to time some of those growers sold portions of their property but retained all their shares in the mill, even though other cane growers came into the industry. That has been a strange feature of some of the mills. As time has passed many of the new cane growers in the area have been unable to become shareholders in the mill because of the articles of association of the co-operative. In some cases even though a new grower has purchased quite a large area of land and has been granted a fair cane assignment, the holding of the land previously held by a shareholder in the co-operative does not entitle him to any shares in the mill or say in its direction. That does not apply only to the Mossman district, but also to other parts of North Queensland. Even though a man might be an active participant in the industry he cannot be a shareholder and can have no say in the conduct of the mill. The shares are held in perpetuity in many cases by people who are no longer engaged in the industry. I think that also occurs in the dairying industry. It is a rather undesirable feature of some of the co-operative sugar mills in Queensland.

Obviously the Act being repealed was originally brought down to protect the Government's loan in connection with the Babinda mill. Now that it has been paid off the necessity for the legislation no longer appears to be warranted. However, we shall have a look at the Bill later.

Motion (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Hiley, read a first time.

GOVERNMENT LOAN BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair)

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (2.35 p.m.): I move—

> "That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to authorise the making of arrangements by the State of Queensland pursuant to the provisions of The Commonwealth and States Financial Agreement Acts, 1927 to 1944, for the raising of certain sums of money by way of loan by the State, and for other purposes."

This Bill seeks authority to raise a further £50,000,000 by way of loans wholly for works and services. I think that hon. members will see the pattern into which this falls. Unfortunately, parliamentary precedent requires that the Bill have a long title, but in practice, in Treasury circles, it is always called "Government Loan Bill, No. Such-and-Such," and that is exactly what it is. It is an authorisation by this Parliament to enable the administration to proceed by raising loans up to the amount authorised by the Parliament. That is necessary because until the Parliament can authorise the raising of loans for expenditure whether on public works and services, which Parliament may subsequently approve, or for the funding of deficits it cannot be done.

At the moment there are three existing authorisations which have not been fully employed. They are, Government Loan Act of 1931, unused balance, £479,691 that was authorised for deficit purposes. It is not available for works and services. The next is the Government Loan Act of 1956, introduced by a previous Government, enabling the raising of £5,000,000 for deficit purposes. No portion of that has been used and it

still stands untouched. Then, in 1959 I brought down a Loan Bill for works and services for £50,000,000 of which £5,600,000 remains still unconsumed.

I want to reiterate to the Committee that the allocation of the proceeds of the recent Commonwealth Loan will exhaust that authorisation which will mean we will not have one penny of authorisation for further loan raising after we have dealt with the proceeds of the recent Commonwealth loan.

Mr. Lloyd: Is that £5,000,000 in 1956 that still remains untouched, for deficit purposes?

Mr. HILEY: Yes. That is untouched. That is our unused balance, £479,691, for deficits from 1931 and £5,000,000 for deficit purposes from 1956. Neither of those has been touched at all over recent years.

The £50,000,000 for works and services for 1959 has been used extensively and there is only £5,600,000 left and that will be fully used in taking up our share of the recent Commonwealth Loan. There is nothing left for future works and services.

The £50,000,000 which is now sought——

Mr. Lloyd: Will you be using any part of the £5,000,000 this year for deficit purposes?

Mr. HILEY: The hon. member should put a towel round his head and sit down some time and study the Financial Statement. He will then know why I do not need to when he has solved the mystery of why there are apparent deficits in the Revenue Account and we still have plenty of money in the till, then and only then will he know the secret of the State's finances.

The £50,000,000 now sought compares with the sums of—

1959—
£50 million for works and services
1956—
£40 million for works and services
£5 million for meeting deficits
1954—
£40 million for works and services

The Bill authorises the Governor in Council to cause Government stock or inscribed stock to be issued or created and delivered or sold but all such transactions must be in accordance with and in the manner provided in the Financial Agreement.

The authority to borrow flows in terms of the Financial Agreement, from the Loan Council. Borrowing is carried out primarily by the Commonwealth Government on behalf of the States, but, as a share of Commonwealth borrowing is allocated to the States, we become the borrower in turn and it is necessary for us to have this loan authorisation. That is the precise purpose of the Bill, but it also provides that loans raised under its authority may be converted or redeemed in accordance with the terms of the Government Loans Redemption and Conversion Act of 1923. That is not a new provision; it has appeared in every loan bill ever since 1923, but it is considered necessary to reiterate the authorisation of the administration to redeem and convert loans in accordance with the guiding Statute, that is, the Government Loans Redemption and Conversion Act of 1923.

The Bill also appropriates the payment of interest and sinking fund contributions on the moneys raised, which become a charge on the revenues of the State in priority to other demands.

Hon. members will remember that when the Estimates are brought down each year they have at the front some schedules. The biggest item is interest on the public debt. It is recited in the Estimates so that hon. members will have a full picture before them, but, having regard to appropriation, there is no need to appropriate anything in the schedules because the enabling Act has done that for all time; with the result that the salaries of judges, the salaries of members of Parliament, the interest and sinking fund contributions on the debt of the State and other things listed in the schedules are appropriated by a relevant Act. The Bill in this instance appropriates the related interest and sinking fund contributions on this money when we raise it, and no further appropriation is then required by Parliament for these expenditures.

The Bill is formal and in conformity with previous loan Bills, and I commend it to hon. members.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (2.42 p.m.): Although I realise that the Bill to a great degree is essentially a machinery one that is introduced every few years, I think hon. members on this side of the Chamber would be somewhat remiss if they did not deal with a few matters related to the borrowing by the State for essential works and services and for other purposes.

The Treasurer said that we would have to sit down with a wet towel round our heads for some hours in the evenings to understand the ramifications of the State's finances, expenditure and deficits in public finance. I assure him that next year we will know considerably more about the position than we may know now.

Mr. Dewar: You won't even have a towel next year.

Mr. LLOYD: We will not need the towel that you have already thrown in. I shall deal first with the requirements of Queensland in years gone by of loan borrowings, and the expenditure of loan money. Queensland's position is peculiar, both geographically and in the potential for development, and our requirements of loan money for development far surpass those of the other States at the moment.

During the war years—I think we can go back to that time—Queensland was a garrison State for the armed forces in the South-eastern Pacific area. Queensland had

to sacrifice necessary works for which loan funds would be required, for example, housing, water supply, road works and other essential projects, in the interests of defence of the country. Owing to the falling off in loan expenditure during those years Queensland suffered badly. It was not in a good position to do battle with the other States in Loan Council meetings. They could have immediately gone to the formula covering the Financial Agreement and told us that the State had not expended any more than a certain sum of money in the previous five years. In the event of any disagreement we would be bound by the fact that that was our average expenditure during that period. Because of this, to a great extent, Queensland was dependent on what money we had placed aside in reserves. Fortunately, during that time this State had Governments that were able to place aside great sums of money. From the Post-war Reconstruction Fund we were able to finance the necessary development works.

There have been some statements of great concern to the people of Queensland emanating from Canberra about the development of Queensland. In particular, some 12 months ago, the Prime Minister said that there had been no request for special consideration for Queensland for the Mt. Isa railway reconstruction. Because of a dispute that was public it was stated that this Government—the Premier, the Treasurer, and other members of Cabinet—had not complained at any time to the Commonwealth Government about the treatment this State had been receiving on that matter. We have been informed that at certain Loan Council meetings, and Premiers' Conferences the Prime Minister of Australia asked our State Government—the Premier and the Treasurer—to let him have some idea of any definite plan of development for Queensland. We have been told that request was made almost two years ago and that up to the last Federal elections that request was ignored by the Premier. Never at any time was any suggestion made by this Government to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, that there was some definite plan for expenditure. When we realise the very great necessity for the State to develop and expand in line with the great potential it possesses, we must regard that as an indictment of the State Government.

While the present Government were in Opposition attacks were made from time to time on Labour Governments. We were told that we were too hasty in our actions. We were told we had an attitude of hatred to the Commonwealth Government and we could not expect to get the necessary finance. The Opposition told us that when they became the Government they would be on a more friendly basis with the Commonwealth Government and that the State would receive a greater allocation from the Commonwealth Government and more preferential treatment in loan expenditure. I agree that there has been some slight improvement in the allocation of loan expenditure for Queensland but it has not been great. It amounts to about .45 per cent. per head of population. It is not enough if we are to develop Queensland, conserve the water and soil in the State, establish and expand the necessary transport facilities, and encourage secondary industries to come to the State. We must spend a great deal more money than we have done in the past to do that.

We saw some change of heart in the Prime Minister immediately following the Federal elections. Once he got over the atomic blast that created the fall-out of nearly £6,000,000 for Queensland, he requested directly through the Press—possibly not trusting to written correspondence—that the State Government give him a definite plan of development for Queensland and he would give it consideration. We must remember that this occurred nine or 10 years after he became Prime Minister and some five years after the present State Government took office. During that time we witnessed a period when we suffered continuous deficits and we saw the draining of the money from our Loan Fund to subsidise the necessary works of national importance.

The reconstruction of the Mt. Isa railway line has had a tremendous effect on the State Loan Fund budgeting. I have not checked on these figures so they may be inaccurate. However, I assure the Committee that they will be somewhere near the mark although they may be £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 out. I could quite easily secure the figures if the magpie over on the other side would stop laughing. I am using the figures purely and simply as an analogy to show the effects on the State's finances, and not as an accurate measure.

In the first year there was a diversion of, I believe, £1.6 million from loan fund to the Mt. Isa railway reconstruction programme. In the second year there was a diversion of some £1,500,000, and in the next year some £1,000,000. That must have a very striking effect on the works that can be carried out in other parts of the State. If Queensland insisted that the Commonwealth place at our disposal enough finance to enable projects of national importance to be continued we should be able to claim that we had a strong Government in this State. But this Government have not done that and in their failure they have been very remiss. £4,000,000 or more has been taken from loan fund expenditure and so other essential works have been starved of funds. It is a matter of very great importance. It is my attitude, and the attitude of any other sensible and thinking person, that that money should be available for that work but the Mt. Isa railway reconstruction scheme is of greater importance to the nation than it is to Queensland. We are called upon to approve of these large sums of money being diverted

from our loan fund expenditure and used for a national purpose, a purpose more vital to the Commonwealth than to the State.

Even the Prime Minister said that he had not heard one word of protest about the treatment meted out to Queensland. We had to go onto the loan market to borrow money to be used for work of national importance. It is unfortunate that the Loan Council, which was formed in 1927, has operated so unfavourably, because of the war years, against the interests of Queensland. Through lack of interest and the attitude adopted by the Queensland Government from time to time no safeguarding provision was made in the Financial Agreement. Over the years the Labour Government were able to subsidise what little money was made available by the Commonwealth, but eventually the well ran dry. The courses then open were (a) to budget for deficits and (b) to beg from the Commonwealth Government. The attitude adopted by the Queensland Labour Government till 1956-1957 was the right one. The people were entitled to be told that the Commonwealth Government were putting so much money into reserves and continually reducing their net loan indebtedness at the expense of every State in Australia, particularly of Queensland. That was responsible for the lack of development in this State. Until we force an amendment to the Financial Agreement and to the Loan Council formula, we will continue to find difficulty in increasing our loan allocations from the Commonwealth.

Meanwhile there must be a forceful voice to inform the people. Just because those in power in Queensland are political colleagues of the Government in Canberra the people of Queensland should not be left in ignorance and in a state in which they are unable to assess who is at fault. The blame has been thrown backwards and forwards. While the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity has from time to time strongly criticised the Commonwealth Government, members of the Liberal Party in the Federal Parliament have criticised the State Government for not advising the Commonwealth of the rightful entitlement of the people of Queensland. It is a matter that needs to be made public and I should like to see a critical line being taken by the Treasurer and his colleagues in the Government for the first time on a matter that I believe to be of great importance to Queensland and to the future development of the State.

At last we have a request officially from the Prime Minister for a plan of development. If we place that before the Commonwealth Government, the loan allocation from the Loan Council must be increased for Queensland or we must receive from the revenue of the Commonwealth Government additional finance to enable us to embark upon projects that are of great importance to the employment level in the State. It is all very well for the Government to go round from city to city, from town to town, forming local advisory committees on unemployment and for the Deputy Premier to announce, with the consent of the Premier, that eight wise men are being appointed, a shadow cabinet of business men, to advise the Government on development and unemployment. The people want some definite action to be taken by the Government, but so far they have been unable to get it. These committees have not available to them the statistics on Government files—I hope that the files will not be made available by the Government to outside business men—to enable them to truly and accurately assess the requirements of the people. But until public capital investment in Queensland is increased to enable us to provide the necessary transport facilities, power, and water, industry will not come here. It has shown a disinclination in the past to come to Queensland, and we cannot expect our present industries to expand or new industries to come here until we provide those things. Unemployment in Queensland will not decrease until industrial activity increases. No doubt we are fortunate that there is every likelihood that a very important oil strike has been made in the State. It could make a great difference to Queensland's economy, and I, like everybody else, would welcome a very specticular strike. However, we must remember that the revenue that would be returned to the State Government would not be as great as the revenue that would be returned to the Commonwealth Government. No doubt there will be a good deal of speculation and investment activity privately in connection with oil, and the difficulty is that that will have a somewhat detrimental effect on the opportunities offering to local authorities and semi-governmental authorities on the loan market. At the same time, if we can have this additional surge of finance into Queensland, I think we can achieve in some measure a stable employment level in the State.

Every Government, whether it is the Commonwealth Government or the State Government, must accept some responsibility for the sudden upsurge of unemployment in the past four or five years. Since 1956 it has grown from a monthly average of about 6,000 to about 25,000 this calendar year. The position is very serious and, as far as possible, we must use every penny at our disposal in works that will provide the greatest possible employment for the greatest number of people.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (2.59 p.m.), in reply: I gather that there is no objection to the Government's being authorised to raise £50,000,000.

Mr. Lloyd: You are quite right.

Mr. HILEY: I gather from the speech delivered by the hon. member for Kedron that he suggests we have not succeeded in

cleaning up the mess of the loan entitlement that they left us. Let me remind the committee that, because of the foolish policies the former Government followed when they were in power, with 14½ per cent. of the population Queensland received only 11.58 per cent. of the loan moneys. During the period that they were in office when a Labour Government was in power in Canberra they received not one penny extra from the Commonwealth Government, and when there was a change of government in Canberra they got not one penny of extra aid. In contrast, look at what we have accomplished. We have slowly managed to build our share back from roughly 11½ per cent. to 12 per cent. of the larger amount, but it is still not enough. It has been as much as we have been able to accomplish to slowly wear down the unfortunate edifice we had to inherit. In addition to getting a larger share of the larger amount we have succeeded for the first time in Queensland's history in getting significant help over and above the loan share. We have had a special loan allocation outside the Loan Council of £20,000,000 for the Mt. Isa reconstruction project. We have had special assistance of £5,000,000 for the beef roads and we received special extra assistance for defence housing. If I remember rightly, on at least two of those matters the Opposition were so querulous about the fact that we got that help in those directions that I began to wonder whether their attitude was that if we had not got it at all they would have been better pleased.

We have carefully attended to our repayments so that we have the best record for repayments of any State in the Commonwealth. We have not only built up our share from 11½ per cent. to 12 per cent., but as a result of our motions and pressure at the Loan Council a special commission of Commonwealth officers was appointed to go round all the States to inspect the matter of repayments and the pattern of it, and to work out the calculation of what we were entitled to under the formula. That commission came up with a report that was based on three alternatives. On the very least of those alternatives we are entitled to a lift of another half per cent. There was never a meeting of the Loan Council that I am looking forward to more than the meeting to be held in May or early June, as a half per cent. will mean more than an extra £1,000,000 on top of our present share. It is getting closer and closer to the point that we are at least getting population parity.

Mr. Bennett: Did they come to that decision after the last Federal elections?

Mr. HILEY: They have not reached the decision yet. I would suggest that instead of wasting the time of the Chamber the hon. member do a little work in the parliamentary library where he could read that that commission was set up at a meeting that was held in June last year. I repeat that having very carefully and skilfully tended the matter of repayments we are slowly wearing away the disadvantage under which Queensland has laboured as a result of the years of Labour administration. Never have I known the atmosphere for Federal aid to be more promising than it is at the moment.

Opposition Members: Only because of the recent Federal elections.

Mr. HILEY: Hon. members opposite can account for it how they like, but I do not quarrel with good fortune. There have been many proposals submitted over the year. Some of them have already come to fruit, although not on the first attempt. One of them I think was on the third attempt. Other proposals we have made are still under examination. I was never more hopeful that some of them will still bear fruit on top of what we already have.

The hon. member for Kedron attacked the policy of the Government, knowing that we were committed to go ahead with the Mt. Isa rebuilding and setting aside £1.6 million——

Mr. Lloyd: I did not.

Mr. HILEY: The hon. member did.

Mr. Lloyd: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. HILEY: Of course he attacked us. He said how foolish it was for us to set aside £1.6 million ——

Mr. LLOYD: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. HILEY: I ask that the hon. member listen to what I am saying. He said that it could have been used to provide current work. Let him deny that.

Mr. LLOYD: I rise to a point of order. I will deny it. I had more time for the Treasurer than that. I did not think he would get up and tell deliberate untruths. I said that it was unfortunate because of the lack of any strength on the Government's part that they had to divert this money from the Loan Fund when it could quite easily have come from Commonwealth sources. I agree that it was necessary for the money to be spent.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. gentleman to accept——

Mr. Lloyd: The Treasurer was not listening.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HILEY: I was merely writing it down as he said it; I will accept his explanation. I am glad that on this occasion he made himself much clearer than he did when he was on his feet.

We did deliberately set aside £1.6 million to avoid the situation that would have occurred had we done what he wanted and used it at the time, and that was the consistent line the Opposition took. We would have found ourselves in the position we had

to face up to in relation to the Mt. Isa line, of having to supply to many fields of public works. Was it not better to spread the £10,000,000 we had to find over four or five years than over three? That is the basis that the Opposition took, and I do not think we ever did anything wiser than to set £1,600,000 aside the first year and similarly in the second year. It is all being used now in the year in which it can be best used.

Mr. Lloyd: How much have you spent this year on the Mt. Isa line?

Mr. HILEY: I cannot answer that out of the air.

Mr. Lloyd: £3,000,000 up to the end of December.

Mr. HILEY: We are spending at an exceedingly good rate because, thanks to the very excellent advice we have had, we will save £5,000,000 on that project.

Mr. Houston: You are only saving it on your own estimates.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly.

Mr. Houston: That is thanks to your estimating of jobs.

Mr. HILEY: Now the hon. member is changing his tune. The hon. member for Kedron also made the point that this Government have never protested about the terms of the Mt. Isa agreement. Why was not an agreement reached for two years? Why did we go to conference after conference, argument after argument, hours and hours of discussion if it were not that we would not accept the terms offered by the Commonwealth Government? Of course there was plenty of argument and dispute and anyone present at those talks can imagine why.

I repeat, it has been the steady endeavour of this Government to slowly and surely improve the share that this State gets of Commonwealth entitlement and to restore the damage that was done in the last few fatal years under Labour.

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. HILEY: We raised our share from 11½ per cent. to 12 per cent. of the pool but it is still not enough. We should have made more headway if we had not been saddled with the low share agreed to by the Opposition when in Government. After the Opposition settled on its low share they created the background against which unemployment grew in this State. They made the foundation for low employment in the State yet they criticise us because it has taken us years to repair the damage they inflicted on the economy of the State.

The final matter that was raised was an expression of fear from the Opposition side that the finding of oil in this State will prejudice the possibility of local authorities raising money. All I can say is for anyone to suggest that shows a gross misunderstanding of the whole position. In the first place, the degree of personal investment support in local authority loans is trifling. Anyone who knows the pattern knows that the investment in local authority enterprise is by institutional support and they are not the people who buy oil shares. The virtual bulk of the stock exchange activity is activity by the personal investor, men speculating in this glamour field of oil recovery.

Mr. Lloyd: The Brisbane City Council and S.E.A. advertising of their loans is unnecessary?

Mr. HILEY: I have already previously stated that I think there is an excessive amount spent on advertising our public loans. I am sure there is too much money spent on advertising them. Most of it is underwritten before the loan is launched. The sub-underwriters are all marshalled before the loan is launched, and I do not think the advertising produces a fraction of a return commensurate with the expenditure on it.

Mr. Bromley: They advertise the day before that you will have to get in the next morning before the loan closes.

Mr. HILEY: Yes. In my opinion all public bodies spend too much money on advertising. It is easy for me to say that, but they are frightened that they will not raise the money. I would not tell them they should not spend the amount of money they do, because, if they did not and they failed in the loans, they could very well come back to the Government and say, "You restrained us from advertising and we did not get what we expected. What are you going to do about it?" I express the personal view that they are unwise in spending as much as they do on advertising, but that is as far as I go. It is their responsibility and they are free to make the decision.

Far from the discovery of oil harming the prospects of local authority loans in Queensland, all the experience the world over is that development in one field acts as a magnet and produces ancillary support in all associated fields. It seems to me that the discovery of oil at Moonie will be of tremendous value to every part of Queensland and every institution in Queensland.

Mr. Aikens: How do you account for the amazing success of the recent Commonwealth loan at a reduced rate of interest, when about three times as much as the amount sought was subscribed?

Mr. HILEY: If the hon. member takes time off to study liquidity, time payment outstandings, bank deposits and bank advances, he will understand the position. All those factors produced the available liquidity, in terms of which it was very easy to get money. Every financial observer knew that this loan was going to be a cold

deck. We took advantage of the opportunity in the Loan Council meeting because we sensed that it was a time when we could succeed in getting great support in spite of the fact that the loan was at a reduced interest rate. The first loan put out at the reduced interest rate was an all-time peace-raising record, simply because liquidity made it possible. Think back to the position 12 months before—time payment advances were soaring, bank advances were soaring and savings bank and other deposits were shrinking. In such a position of tight liquidity, money-raising is difficult. When liquidity is good, money-raising is easy. That is the real explanation behind the success of the loan.

I think I have dealt with the several matters raised. I commend the Bill.

Motion (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Hiley, read a first time.

ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER ACTS AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair)

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani—Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity) (3.16 p.m.): I move—

> "That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Electric Light and Power Acts, 1896 to 1958, and the Regional Electric Authorities Acts, 1945 to 1958, each in certain particulars, and the State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1958, in a certain particular."

The purpose of the Bill is to rectify omissions and anomalies in various Acts which relate to electricity and to introduce a number of provisions that will facilitate further development of electricity undertakings. Firstly, with respect to conditions included in orders and licences issued to mining companies, for supply on their own properties, it will ensure that the provisions of the Acts do not extend beyond matters associated with public safety, which is all that was intended or required.

Secondly, it will enable Orders in Council under which electric authorities operate to be amended. This will permit the introduction of a modified guarantee system which will be of benefit to consumers. Very often we find that under the guarantee system, over a period of years, the consumers are hit pretty hard, and we have no power to alter it. This gives us power to control it and the only time an alteration will be made will be when it is in the interests of the consumers.

Thirdly, it will enable appliances and equipment approved in other States to be approved automatically in Queensland. This is in line with agreement reached with other States where similar legislation is proposed.

Fourthly, it will bring the provisions of the Act relating to compensation for careless or accidental damage to electric authorities' works into line with similar provisions in the Southern Electricity Authority of Queensland Acts and in electricity supply legislation in other States which provide for damages up to £100 compared with £5 under the Electric Light and Power Acts, which has existed since 1896.

Fifthly, the Bill makes provision for the preclusion of any employee of a regional electricity board who is a member of a local authority from becoming a member of the regional board employing him.

Sixthly, it will enable regional electricity boards to act in an advisory capacity to, and carry out work for, other electric authorities outside their respective regions. That is often very necessary. For instance at Cairns, they are going to work near the Townsville boundary. This gives authority for them to do that work in the Townsville region.

Seventhly, it makes provision for the authorisation of senior regional board officers, other than the manager, to sign, with the secretary, vouchers authorising expenditure.

Eighthly, it will clarify the Commission's position with respect to powers and privileges of the Crown. That is the recommendation of the Crown Solicitor.

It will be seen that the Bill is a simple one and none of its provisions are controversial. The Bill does not introduce any new major principles in electricity supply legislation.

I commend the Bill to the consideration of the Committee.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (3.21 p.m.): The Minister has certainly treated all the various amendments to the legislation as very simple amendments. In view of his sketchy coverage of the Bill it is impossible for us to discuss any of the matters he has mentioned. We have merely been given the headings of what is to be amended so we cannot begin to consider the proposals. We may very well discover later that some of the provisions will not be in the best interests of some people.

The Minister did mention guarantees demanded of consumers by supply authorities. That matter has often been argued in all parts of the State and it calls for very careful study. The Minister said that the intention was to serve the interests of the consumer, and naturally we accept his word, but we will have to wait till we see the Bill before we can study it in detail.

He spoke of anomalies but did not give any indication of what they were. He mentioned giving mining companies licence to do work. I take it that that is work within their own property and that that work would not be subject to inspection by the local authority.

Mr. Evans: Other than for safety checks.

Mr. HOUSTON: Other than for safety measures.

Mr. Evans: That is so.

Mr. HOUSTON: Perhaps the Minister in his reply will indicate whether Mary Kathleen will be included in that.

Mr. Evans: Yes, Mary Kathleen will be.

Mr. HOUSTON: It certainly covers the mining venture, but it also covers the men's homes and everything else. If we are providing separately for dwellings owned by a company at this stage, we will have to give very careful thought in the future to places that are developed now as townships, particularly Mary Kathleen, and that eventually become privately owned. The workmanship, as distinct from safety, may have to be looked at.

I am surprised that the Minister did not take this opportunity to introduce amending provisions along the lines of those introduced by the Minister for Education and Migration in the Electrical Workers and Contractors Bill. That Bill gives greater power to the electrical inspectors of various supply authorities and regional boards. I think the Minister might have taken the opportunity in this Bill to set standards for electrical inspectors covered by the regional boards. It is in the other measure, but we cannot deal with it because it is covered by the Electric Light and Power Act. Briefly the position is that the electrical inspector is authorised by the various regional boards to inspect work that is carried out by contractors. In the great majority of cases the inspectors have not the best qualifications. In other words, inspectors go to inspect the work of men who have higher qualifications than they have. I ask the Minister to look at the sections of the Act covering installation inspectors and to see whether, when the Bill is before the House later, he can bring down some amendments of the qualifications required for those inspectors. There will be no extra charge on the State.

The Brisbane City Council is the only authority in Queensland that demands that installation inspectors pass a qualifying examination prior to their appointment. In some country areas under the control of regional boards we have the spectacle of a man working one day as a tradesman for the regional board or the local authority and the next day acting as his own installation inspector. I think that the Minister should examine the position very carefully.

I prefer to leave further comments on the legislation until the second reading stage.

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani—Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity) (3.27 p.m.), in reply: I think that the only matter to which I should refer in my reply is the qualifications of inspectors of installations. I am informed by the Commissioner that all electrical installations must be inspected by qualified persons who are approved by the Electricity Commission. People are breaking the law if the installations are made by other than a qualified person.

Mr. Houston: Is that in the mining centres?

Mr. EVANS: Yes, in the mining centres.

Motion (Mr. Evans) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Evans, read a first time.

BABINDA TOWNSHIP (LANDS) BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gaven, South Coast, in the chair)

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation) (3.30 p.m.): I move—

> "That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced relating to certain allotments in the township of Babinda held under perpetual lease under and pursuant to the Sugar Works Act of 1911."

This is merely a machinery provision to deal with land that has now become redundant in view of the Bill that the Treasurer introduced this morning, and which the Department of the Treasury is anxious to hand over to the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. Lloyd: Was it held in perpetual leasehold before the 1924 Act?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not know. By the passing of that Act the Treasurer was able to issue perpetual leases to certain members of the community who lived in and around the mill. They have been administered by the Department of the Treasury ever since. It is more appropriate that the Department of Public Lands do that sort of thing; it is the usual line of business. The Treasurer is anxious to hand them over, and the Bill enables it to be done. Without affecting the tenure or any of the conditions the leases are now going to be administered by the Department of Public Lands, not by the Treasurer.

In connection with the construction of the Babinda sugar mill an area in that locality was set aside for township and mill purposes. It was vested by deed of grant in the name of the Corporation of the Treasurer of Queensland. Powers were

contained in Order in Council dated 22 May, 1914, under the Sugar Works Act of 1911. The Corporation of the Treasurer subsequently granted a number of perpetual leases under that Act. By the Babinda Township Act of 1930 all the subject land, with the exception of the leased areas, reverted to the Crown as Crown land under the Land Act. The leased areas continued to be held under the existing Act. It is considered desirable that the remaining areas held under leases from the Corporation of the Treasurer become Crown land and be subject to the Land Act.

In effect the Bill is designed to have these areas brought under the control of the Department of Public Lands as logically the matter of rental collections and administration more appropriately is the function of the Department of Public Lands. The days of the establishment of the area have long since passed, and the circumstances of the time that made it necessary to have the land under the control of the Corporation of the Treasurer no longer exist.

The Bill makes specific provision that although in the divesting of the areas from the Corporation the existing leases will be deemed to be leases subject to the Land Act, no provision of the Land Act will apply so as to adversely affect any term, provision or condition of the existing leases. The Bill provides for the absolute protection of the lessees' interests, and simply makes provision for these leases to be administered by my department as, indeed, it has been responsible for the collection of rentals since 1958.

It is a short Bill which in effect takes certain leasehold areas out of the custody of the Treasurer and puts them into the custody of the Department of Public Lands. Both the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Public Lands are in complete agreement that this be done. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Motion (Mr. Fletcher) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Fletcher, read a first time.

QUEENSLAND STATUTES (1962 REPRINT) BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Gaven, South Coast, in the chair)

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (3.38 p.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to make provision in relation to the publication of an annotated reprint of the Public Acts of Queensland, under the title of the Queensland Statutes (1962 Reprint) and to empower the courts to take judicial notice of such reprint."

This Bill, as indicated in the motion which was given on 5 December last, is a Bill to make provision in relation to the publication of an annotated reprint of the Public Acts of Queensland and to empower the courts to take judicial notice of such reprint.

As to the need for such a reprint there can be no doubt. It is now slightly more than a quarter of a century since the reprint, as at 1 January, 1937, which followed the Statutes Reprint Act of 1936, and having in mind the extent and complexity of the legislation enacted since 1936 it might well be felt that the present proposal is overdue.

In this connection I may say that the question of a reprint of the Statutes was considered at a very early stage in the life of the present Government, but it was then decided that before commencing a reprint we should first proceed with a review and modernisation, and in some cases consolidation, of many of our statutes which were either defective or outmoded by the passage of time.

This process of legislative review, although not yet complete, has now proceeded to a stage where we feel justified in making a commencement on the major task of a complete reprint which will be primarily on the basis of the law as in operation on Monday, 2 July, 1962. I use the word "primarily" in relation to the date 2 July, 1962, for reasons which I will explain later.

The proposed Bill, which will be in clear and simple terms, may be described as being evidentiary and authoritative rather than executive. The reason for this is that there are details of the arrangements for production and publication still to be worked out.

The primary purpose of the Bill is to make provision for the appointment of an Editorial Board and for the making of such reports and the giving of such certificates as may be necessary to ensure that the reprint will be given judicial recognition.

Whilst as I have indicated final arrangement for the actual production of the reprint have not yet been worked out it may be of interest to hon. members if I give some explanation of the type of arrangement which is contemplated.

Negotiations are at present in course with Butterworth & Co. (Australia) Ltd. with a view to an agreement being entered into with that company for the publication of the 1962 Reprint on a basis generally similar to the arrangements made with that company at the time of the 1936 reprint.

The broad basis of the contemplated arrangement is that Butterworths will be primarily responsible for the editorial work and the editorial cost, while the Government will be responsible for the printing and binding which will be done at the Government's cost either by the Government Printer or such other printers as the Government Printer may require to call upon to assist.

There will be a number of other detailed matters to be arranged between the Government and the publishers including a formula for the sharing of revenue from sales of the publication on a basis that will be fair and reasonable to both parties.

The basic purpose of the reprint will be to set forth correctly the Public Acts as in force as at 2 July, 1962, but with provision so that particular Acts, including amendments where appropriate, passed after 2 July, 1962, will, where considered desirable, be included in the appropriate volumes with suitable certification. The Acts will be suitably annotated with systematic references to Halsbury's Laws of England, The English and Empire Digest, Halsbury's Statutes of England, and The Australian Encyclopaedia of Forms and Precedents, and decided cases in Queensland and the High Court of Australia and where useful, other Australian and overseas cases, special attention being paid to decisions of the High Court of Australia and Privy Council arising on Queensland statutes. The work of annotation will be the responsibility of the publishers.

It is further proposed that the Government will appoint an Editorial Board whose function shall be to certify to the Government as to the inclusion in the reprint of all enactments which it is considered desirable to reprint and as to the satisfactory production of the work in general. It is expected that the Editorial Board will consist of the Chief Justice or some other Judge of the Supreme Court, the Solicitor-General and the Parliamentary Draftsman, while the Parliamentary Draftsman will also act as Consultant Editor. The publishers will appoint a managing editor and be responsible for his remuneration.

The procedure for obtaining judicial recognition generally will be that the Minister for Justice will certify to the correctness of the Acts, etc., contained in each volume, such certificate to be signed upon the Editorial Board's reporting to him that it is satisfied as to such correctness. A copy of the certificate will be published at the beginning of each volume. I may say that the practical effect of this certification will be that the statute as printed, in the form of the reprint, will be given judicial recognition until the contrary is proved, either by production of the official volume of the statute in which the enactment was originally contained or otherwise.

The reprint generally will follow the lines of the 1936 reprint and will aim at including all public general Acts in force, omitting repealed enactments, and incorporating all amendments in their appropriate place in the texts of the amended Acts. While local or personal Acts will not generally be included in the reprint, some enactments of a local nature, as in the previous reprint, will be included. The plan of the reprint will not, in general, include the publication of such English Acts as are still in force in Queensland although exceptions will be made if the editorial board recommends their inclusion. Reference to such English Acts, and to where they may be found in Halsbury's Complete Statutes of England will be given in the preliminary notes to the titles affected or in the annotations.

The work of preparing and printing the reprint will, of course, be one of considerable magnitude. To give some idea of this I may mention that the 1936 reprint comprised 11 volumes including one index volume of two parts. The work of preparing the first 10 volumes took slightly more than four years while the publication of the final volume was unavoidably delayed until after the end of World War II. It is anticipated that the proposed new consolidation will comprise about 15 or 16 volumes of text of approximately 800-850 pages each. In addition, there will be one volume of indices which it is expected will comprise approximately 1,200 pages.

It is hoped to make arrangements in terms of which the last of the copy of Volume 1 of the proposed reprint will be handed to the Government Printer by 30 September next. If this is achieved, the first volume should be available by 31 March, 1963, and thereafter one volume every three months until completion.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (3.49 p.m.): When speaking on the introduction of this Bill I think it should be quite clearly stated that it is highly desirable. The Minister pointed out that it is long overdue. However, it appears that it has been consistent with the practise of the State to introduce a consolidation and reprint of the statutes about once every quarter of a century. It is rather interesting to read the foreword to the last reprint written by the late Sir James Blair who was then Chief Justice of Queensland. On 29 April, 1937, his foreword to the reprint said—

> "A general reprint of the statutes of Queensland is long overdue. More than a quarter of a century has elapsed since the publication of the edition of 1910-1911 and in the interval Parliament has passed hundreds of new Acts, amended scores of old Acts and re-enacted several others in consolidated form.
>
> "The plan of the present undertaking marks an advance in many respects on all that have preceded it. It owes much more to the learning and industry of the editors. For the first time in the history of our State the whole body of the public statutes is annotated. Not only is each group of Acts prefaced by a useful preliminary note, but each several Act is furnished with a concise sectional apparatus. 'That codeless myriad of precedent' which lies dispersed through many volumes of reports is appropriately distributed; it is supported by a careful system of cross-references.

"These characteristic features of the work, combined with an authentic text, as amended to 31st December, 1936, and a full general index, will ensure for it a cordial welcome, especially from the bench, from both branches of the legal profession, and from the different public departments charged with the administration of various statutory enactments."

They were the sentiments expressed by the late Sir James Blair on the introduction of the previous reprint and consolidation and those sentiments and observations can be applied with the same force and satisfaction and cordial welcome now.

It is quite obvious that the administration of the law becomes very difficult, sometimes even a little confusing, when you have to wade through 25 volumes to ensure that you have acquainted yourself with the various amendments of certain statutes from time to time and that you have apprised yourself of the latest amendments and of the final statute as it applies at the present time. It entails a great deal of research and it involves a certain amount of loss of time and certainly is rather an inconvenient method of ensuring that your submissions on the law are up to date and in keeping with the law that has been passed by the Parliament. So in effect the reprint and consolidation mean that you need to go to only one volume of the statutes to satisfy yourself on the law as it applies in some particular regard rather than wade through several volumes of the statutes since 1936. The proposal to amend the statutes is desirable and commendable and something that must be done. It is the duty of any Government to do it. Certainly it should not be left longer than a quarter of a century. Therefore we are dealing with what might be termed a machinery amendment to the administration of the statutes so that this Government and the law courts and the legal men and various governmental departments can be brought up to date with the law and can find out with much more facility what the law is. So the move must be supported and we support it.

No doubt the Government have already received tremendous assistance from various men in connection with it, not the least of whom in my opinion would be the late Mr. Kennedy Allen who worked hard and in detail for many years to annotate our statutes, to amend them, to sift out the dead wood and to make their working as easy as possible for those legal men who were called upon to use them. Mr. Kennedy Allen was one of the chief authors of the previous reprint, and I understand that up till his death he worked on the preparation of the present reprint. He was a great scholar. He worked diligently and adopted painstaking methods that would not have been adopted by many leading barristers at the Bar. I think it is opportune that Parliament should pay a tribute to Mr. Kennedy Allen for his annotations over the years. Up until his death, he was responsible for the annotation of the Statutes from year to year as they came from Parliament.

The Queensland Statutes in their printed form are by far the best when compared with the Statutes of other Australian States and give legal men and members of the judiciary much more information. Again the man responsible for providing us with that careful detail was the late Mr. Kennedy Allen.

I listened with interest to the remarks of the Minister when introducing the legislation. He said that it was intended to provide a reprint in 1957, but that, in the interim, the Government intended to bring legislation up to date and, to paraphrase his expression, iron out certain anomalies. The only observation I can make on that is that since 1957 the Government have thrown a great deal of chaos and confusion into the Statutes. If the reprint had been completed in 1957, perhaps it would have avoided much of the confusion and many of the anomalies that have arisen from amendments that have been made since then. I could refer to much of the legislation enacted by the Government, but the legislation that comes to mind immediately is the Traffic Act amendments. Any barrister, policeman, Crown law officer or other person who works with the Traffic Act and keeps it up to date is convinced that he has nothing but a pak-a-pu ticket. He can hardly find space in the original Act in which to include the amendments, and it becomes very confusing. I have heard the remarks of the Minister in charge of the Traffic Act, and who formerly was in charge of the Police Department, when introducing amendments to the Act over the past 12 or 18 months, and he has indicated clearly from time to time that those amendments were by no means final and that he had further amendments to introduce. He said that eventually the Traffic Act would be codified and reprinted. It is in such a mess now that it is crying out for clarification and to have the dead wood removed from it.

I say to the Minister for Justice that it is idle to introduce this legislation to provide for a reprint in a consolidated form if it is proposed to radically amend any of the existing legislation within the immediate and foreseeable future. Although, as I said, the reprint is highly desirable and will be welcomed by the legal profession and all those who practise law, it will put them to a great deal of expense. Their old Statutes will no longer be of any use; they will have to buy the reprint, which will be very costly.

Mr. Pizzey: It will be an income tax deduction.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes, but one does not receive an adequate deduction for the cost. In any case it is an expensive procedure, both for the Government to reprint the statutes and for the profession who will have to buy the

reprint, even though they will welcome it. When they buy it naturally they will expect that the reprint will stand them in good stead for at least some few years. They are not going to expect that the Government will change radically any of the legislation contained in the consolidated reprint. Therefore, if the Minister who administers the Traffic Act intends to amend the Traffic Act radically and severely, such further amending surely should be done before there is a consolidated reprint. If that is not done not only will it be confusing, but if the amendments are made in the fashion they have been made in the last couple of years, the Government could well make a real mess of that volume of the statutes with all the unnecessary amendments being stuck in from time to time. As a matter of fact, the binding will burst because of the amendments. If a Government are consolidating their existing statutes surely it is a clear indication from them that the consolidation will contain their legislation as they desire it for that particular term of Parliament, other than perhaps for certain minor amendments of various Acts in the short period remaining in the term of that Government. That is the logical conclusion to which any man must come. He must believe that the Government have concluded their major legislation in their term of office, that they no longer have any substantial amendments to make to their existing legislation. With the adoption of the motion moved this afternoon by the Minister for Justice all Queenslanders now can, perhaps not be satisfied, but come to the conclusion, that the Government have enacted all the substantial legislation that they intend to enact during their present term of office.

Mr. Pizzey: Non sequitur.

Mr. BENNETT: If it is a non sequitur the Government are acting in a very illogical manner. Surely the hon. gentleman would not suggest that they are going to all the expense of producing a consolidated reprint of the statutes, bound with leather no doubt for the Minister for Justice and his colleagues, bound in buckram for the less important officers of Parliament, bound in cardboard for the hon. member for Windsor in his practice, but nevertheless expensive——

Mr. Smith: Are you going to have yours bound at all?

Mr. BENNETT: Seeing that the hon. member no doubt will continue to borrow my set I will need to have it bound so that it can stand up to a lot of use. Surely what I have suggested is the logical conclusion to draw. The Companies Act will take up a volume of its own. If it is intended to enact any further substantial amendments it is idle at this stage to consolidate and reprint in fixed and permanent form the existing set of statutes that apply to Queensland. I am fortified in my belief that we are being given a clear indication and proof that the Government have no longer any substantial legislation to introduce during their term of office when I look at the Orders of the Day and the legislation contained therein. Most of it is legislation that is not of major importance. So I should say that even the agenda, the order of the day, is a clear indication supporting my contention that the Government have reached the end of their tether so far as new legislation is concerned and will be content to run along now until the next election hoping that the unemployment position will improve in the meantime.

This move to introduce the consolidation is again an admission from the lips of the Minister for Justice on behalf of his Government that they have abandoned for the time being the proposal to introduce certain legislation referred to in the 1957 election policy speech—the Bill of Rights. Surely they should now be prepared, having made the tacit admission by reprinting the statutes without the Bill of Rights, to admit that Queensland is not going to have this much vaunted Bill of Rights that was heralded with a blare of trumpets in 1957 but which has lain on the stocks ever since. Surely the Minister for Justice will be frank enough to show the integrity of his Government by admitting that they do not intend to introduce the Bill of Rights, that they have abandoned such a proposal and that it was only an election stunt designed to deceive the people of Queensland and will never appear in a set of statutes of this country.

I feel that the proposal is a good one. I know that it will be welcomed by the judiciary. The judiciary at the moment are working three short in number. Their duties at the moment are increased because they have to go through approximately 25 volumes of the statutes, which will be unnecessary after the consolidation. Therefore, whilst the Government are not prepared to bring the numerical strength of the judiciary up to its proper standard, I suppose this will relieve them of some of the duties they have had to shoulder in the past.

By accepting the responsibility of this consolidation the State is facing up to its responsibilities in a manner in rather sharp contrast to the way in which the Government have faced up to their responsibilities in other regards. We have lost one Federal seat in Queensland, we are three judges short; we are losing everywhere, but apparently we are going to hold our own so far as reprinting the statutes is concerned. In this we are attending to a necessity so far as the administration of justice is concerned. I feel that the Minister for Justice will also accept the same responsibility in the administration of law in other respects. It has been whispered to me that the reason why his Government—I do not say he personally—will not shoulder their responsibility in regard to the numerical strength of the judiciary is that they fear to face a by-election. It is a rather sorry thing that the law list is growing because of the absence of judges and of buildings in which judges can sit. The judges, however,

will now have the statutes consolidated; some of them will have courts in which to sit. All we shall have to do is improve the standard by providing satisfactory courts, now lacking, and to bring the judiciary up to full numerical strength. I suppose when the Editorial Board examine the statutes they will be able to tell the Minister for Justice and his colleagues that much of the legislation that has been enacted in the past four years is either redundant or unnecessary or has been an impediment to the welfare of the State.

I am confident that the editorial committee will be able to advise the Minister so satisfactorily that much of the verbiage, and I do not mean legal jargon, in matters dealt with in the statute will be removed, and it will be found that the size of the statutes, the volume of printing and costs will be reduced.

Dealing directly with the proposal to reprint and consolidate, I commend the Minister for his desire to do so, and I know that all members of the profession in Queensland and other States who have to use the statutes will welcome his action.

Mr. SMITH (Windsor) (4.11 p.m.): I hasten to assure the Minister that the proposal will meet with not merely the acclamation but the heartfelt acclamation of all persons who have to consult the statute books of Queensland.

In no other place would we hear the carping criticism that has just been concluded. In no other place would there be anyone who would point the slightest finger of scorn at a Government who without delay undertook the consolidation of statute law.

We were told a moment ago by the hon. member for South Brisbane that the mere fact that we are now consolidating must be taken as an indication that no major legislative step is contemplated. Perhaps the hon. member does not know what his own party did. In 1936 there was a consolidation, known as the Butterworth Reprint or the 1936 Reprint, and in 1937 a Sessional Volume was produced. In the year 1936, I point out for the benefit of the hon. member for South Brisbane, the Labour Government were in office. In 1937, one year after the reprint had been undertaken, the self-same Government brought down a number of legislative measures, not the least of which was the Health Act. If hon. members look at the 1937 sessional volume, they will find that the Act has a width which I now demonstrate to the Chamber, and that it starts at page 16,597 and continues to page 16,744. That is not a small pamphlet copy of an Act; it is an Act of reasonable size.

Mr. Davies: A very good Act.

Mr. SMITH: It might be, but if the hon. member wants to argue perhaps he should have been present and should have listened to his colleague. His colleague said while he was absent that we were reprinting apparently because no major alterations were intended. I am pointing out the action of his own Government. I ask hon. members to look at other 1937 measures. There were plenty of them and they were all big. It is a good idea for an hon. member before he makes such absurd allegations to find out what has been done previously. Precedent plays a very big part in law.

One measure to which the hon. member for South Brisbane referred was the Companies Act. Statements have been made and publicised that it will come into operation from 1 July, 1962. Today the Minister explained to the Chamber that the reprint was to take effect from 2 July, 1962. It does not take very much political, legislative or judicial acumen to work out that any enactment from 1 July, 1962, will automatically be included in the reprint taking effect from 2 July, 1962, so that the Companies Act will not mean an alteration of the volume.

For the benefit of the hon. member for South Brisbane I also point out that, if he wants to criticise what the Minister in charge of traffic is doing, he should go back to the introductory remarks on the amendment of the Traffic Acts. The Minister expressly pointed out that the amendment he was bringing down was an interim measure, in anticipation of an Australasian traffic code. That was anticipated this year and he was making these amendments because he felt they were justifiably urgent. He made that quite clear and made no pretence whatever.

Mr. BENNETT: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Windsor misquoted me. He said that according to my contention when a consolidation and reprint is introduced it is an indication that you have enacted most of the substantial legislation for that particular Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I presume that the point of order that the hon. member wishes to take is that the hon. member for Windsor has misquoted him.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Windsor to accept the explanation of the hon. member for South Brisbane. The hon. member cannot continue and make a speech out of a point of order.

Mr. SMITH: I accept the explanation of the hon. member for South Brisbane, but I wish he would say what he means.

Mr. Bennett: The legislation referred to by the hon. member for Windsor was after the 1937 elections.

The CHAIRMAN: I asked the hon. member to accept the explanation, and he has done so.

Mr. Bennett: It was after the elections in 1937. He did not tell us that.

Mr. SMITH: If I misunderstood the hon. member when he said we had obviously finished our main programme, I am very sorry. I misunderstood what he said but I cannot understand what he does not say.

Mr. Bennett: You did not tell us there was an election in 1937.

Mr. SMITH: I have pointed out to the satisfaction of the hon. member for South Brisbane that the Companies Act will be incorporated in the reprint. I also point out to him that he is the only one in Queensland who will be concerned about it. The rest of the legal fraternity will be delighted. The hon. member should look at the debate on the Traffic Act; he was not here.

Mr. Bennett: I was here: Do not tell untruths.

Mr. SMITH: In that case the hon. member did not hear. Apparently I must explain it to him. It is quite clear; it is quite simple. The Minister brought these amendments down in advance of the Australasian Traffic Code. He believed they were urgent amendments. When the reprint was undertaken in 1936 it took a number of years to complete and I daresay we will not be any quicker on this occasion in the legal world, or with the printing. The letter "T" is well down the alphabet and will not be reached until "A" to "S" is printed, so the Australasian Traffic Code will have ample time to be printed, annotated and incorporated in our statutes before the volume including the legislation beginning with "T" is bound. So there again I think the hon. member has needless fears about the printing of this particular volume. I should say it would be infinitely cheaper to have it done in cardboard, and then have it rebound in leather.

I have already indicated my delight with the reprint and I know of the delight of many others. However, I ask the Minister to consider the practice in other States. I do not suggest that this should be undertaken until the full reprint is completed, and if it is completed within three or four years it will take us to 1965 or 1966. As from 1967 it would be desirable for the Government of the day, and I have no hesitation in saying that the Government will still be a Country–Liberal Party Government——

Mr. Davies: Remember 9 December?

Mr. SMITH: I remember it well.

The Government of the day could well reprint in the sessional volumes any Act that has been substantially amended. The Commonwealth Government adopt this practice. They have a very fine method of printing the statutes and a couple of other Australian States do likewise. They reprint in sessional volume Acts that have, in the intervening years, become somewhat unwieldy, so there is a sessional volume showing the enactments of the year as well as Acts that have become cumbersome. That is a very good practice. If it were resorted to after this reprint we could look forward to the years to come without any fear or trepidation.

Mr. Pizzey: Will you concede that that is not an easy job?

Mr. SMITH: I should not think it very difficult.

Mr. Hanlon: Does that delay the sessional reprint very much?

Mr. SMITH: No. It is done contemporaneously. It is put at the end of the sessional volume. I keep my own statutes amended. It is a wonder the hon. member for South Brisbane does not do likewise. I have to refer to only a number. I do not have to go through the whole 25. I insert the smaller amendments and note the reference to the larger ones. One thing it does, it avoids what has been the result of Labour's inactivity in this field from 1936 to 1957. For some of those 21 years I imagine the Labour Party was blessed with the advice of the hon. member for South Brisbane and the rest of the time he might also have been in the party. In those 21 years Queensland's statute law was encased in an ever-increasing number of sessional volumes. You can see them on the shelves in the chamber. We had the reprint in 1936 and a volume for each succeeding year.

It ill behoves the previous speaker to attack the Minister in the way he did. The Minister has seen fit without any undue delay to institute this reprint. He has discharged his duties most nobly and the reprint will be welcomed in all quarters.

Motion (Mr. Munro) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Munro, read a first time.

SWINE COMPENSATION FUND BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick—Minister for Agriculture and Forestry) (4.25 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

I gave a very broad outline of the contents of this Bill at the introductory stage and I do not think I need add much more. However, the Leader of the Opposition asked whether the virus that affects pigmeats would stand refrigeration. I am told by experienced officers in my department that it can stand a considerable amount of refrigeration and remain quite virile. On the other hand, they tell me that it does not withstand heat to the same extent. Trials have been held and infected meat has been held under refrigeration for quite lengthy periods and the virus has remained active.

I am pleased that hon. members opposite have approached the matter in a non-political way. It is a nationally important measure, and I hope that at some future meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council we may achieve a good deal of uniformity on this question. All States are already contributing to the campaign against pleuro-pneumonia, and we sincerely hope that we shall be able to attract the interest of the Commonwealth Government in this campaign.

I do not think that I can add anything to what I said at the introductory stage.

Motion (Mr. Madsen) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 23, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

GRAMMAR SCHOOLS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis—Minister for Education and Migration) (4.28 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This is a simple Bill to provide for debenture loans and to give grammar schools power to borrow with a Government guarantee, with provision for temporary overdraft accommodation. It has been universally accepted by hon. members. I have nothing to add.

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (4.29 p.m.): I have read the Bill and studied it very well, and there is only one comment I should like to make. It is regrettable that the grammar schools should have to be granted permission to borrow by the sale of debentures, bonds and inscribed stock. We, of course, have been familiar with the procedure that has been adopted for years in the financing of the grammar schools, and it is indicative of the times that this extra avenue of finance has to be opened.

I do not know whether the House is familiar with what has happened in the last financial year in regard to grammar schools, but a brief summary of the financing of their activities would no doubt be of interest.

In 1960-61 the money advanced from the Loan Fund by the Treasury Department to grammar schools was £44,380. The subsidy on capital expenditure was £28,842. For individual details of the schools I refer hon. members to the Auditor-General's report at page 250. The endowment paid by the Department of Education to grammar schools for the same year totalled £62,200, which was an increase of £10,000 on each of the previous years. Again I shall not itemise each school, but the repayments to the Loan Fund for the same year were £9,604 0s. 10d. It is evident to the House that the State Government through the Treasury and the Education Department handed to the grammar schools in the last financial year the sum of £135,422, part of which was subject to the normal loan conditions, of course. There are no figures available of the receipts and expenditures of those schools. It is not easy to form a clear picture.

From the report made by the Minister for Education yesterday I came to the conclusion that there were approximately 3,000 students at those schools, of which 1,300 would be boarders. Present day trends show that there has been a wonderful expansion in the education system, not only in the numbers of children attending secondary schools, but also in the rising standard of education that is demonstrated every year by the examination results. As the Minister said yesterday, perhaps it is due to the highly competitive spirit existing amongst teachers, or perhaps to the greater appreciation of the value of education.

There is going to be a complication in 1964 when the new plan is put into operation. It will mean that the Grade VIII., known as the Scholarship grade, will become the lowest form in the secondary school. I suppose you could call it the Fifth Form. We realise that grammar schools like every other secondary school throughout the State, will have an increased school population of between 20 and 25 per cent. Schools that are not dependent on the State for their complete financing will be faced with this added responsibility to provide accommodation for both day students and boarders. Additional finance will be needed quickly. It is understandable that the Treasury loans that have been made available in the past will be totally inadequate to fulfil their commitments and provide the accommodation so necessary in the State's expanding education system. Therefore it is with the sincere hope that the people connected with the schools will have the greatest success in their ventures in this field that I make these comments. I also hope that the financial crisis that is advancing so swiftly upon them will become evident to the old boys and girls from those schools. I hope it will encourage many of them to become benefactors of these institutions which contributed not only to their welfare but also to the benefit of the State of Queensland, and that the borrowing activities of these schools will be greatly reduced by the generosity of their past students.

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis—Minister for Education and Migration) (4.36 p.m.), in reply: What the hon. member for Barcoo has said is true to a great extent. There will be a very heavy burden on grammar schools in the next few years, but the changeover will not be quite so hard for

them as for many of the State high schools, because in almost every case they already have provision for seventh and eighth grades. Most of the high schools have to provide extra accommodation for these younger people. Nearly all the grammar schools have some children in the primary section. Whilst they might have only half the number they can put through 8th grade normally, they have some accommodation already and it will not be quite so bad as we expect. They will find it harder to provide laboratories and equipment and special types of rooms when we introduce the new system.

This Bill will give them the opportunity to get the finance and be a little independent about it. There is no reason why we should not tap the sources of revenue available.

Motion (Mr. Pizzey) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 12, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough —Premier): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 6 March, 1962."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.39 p.m.